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# Doubting Thomas: A Study of Thomas Hobbes's Post-Restoration Dialogues

Adam George Yoksas  
*Loyola University Chicago*

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

DOUBTING THOMAS:

A STUDY OF THOMAS HOBBS'S POST-RESTORATION DIALOGUES

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

BY

ADAM GEORGE YOKSAS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

AUGUST 2010



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A debt is owed to the many people who have inspired and shaped me, and in turn, inspired and shaped this work. I would first like to thank my dissertation committee for their service and insight: three men who deserve to be acknowledged individually as well. This study would not be possible without the piercing logic and high standards of my dissertation director John Danford. His thorough consideration of my many thoughts was instrumental in shaping not only this study, but the mind that produced it. His precise suggestions and care in his critiques helped to bring this study to completion.

Equally important to me are the efforts of Claudio Katz, the man who first welcomed me to Loyola University Chicago. Throughout the years of my study, he was and continues to be many things for me, a wise tutor, a compassionate listener, a meticulous critic, and a good friend. Few I have encountered in my life to this point have fulfilled so many roles and, as time passes, I recognize his impact in my development as a complete academician. His presence is hopefully evident throughout this study.

I would also like to thank Robert Mayer for his commitment to this project. Perhaps the greatest lesson I have learned from him is this: if political philosophy is to be truly valuable, it must strive to constantly make itself relevant to political practice. His office door was always open to me, never letting the business of academic life interfere with the life of the mind.

I must also mention those other scholars who have inspired and influenced this work. I would be remiss if I did not thank two scholars from Northwestern University, Keith Topper and Dilip Gaonkar, for inviting me to the Center for Global Communication and Culture Summer Institute on Rhetoric and Political Thought in 2007 and again in 2008. I was introduced to two scholars through this program that deeply influenced my approach to this study, Kirstie McClure and Victoria Silver. I found Kirstie McClure's overall approach to studying the moderns extremely intriguing and her comments on my initial observations of Hobbes were very useful in helping me to approach Hobbes from a new direction. Victoria Silver's interest in my study was invaluable to me, and her generosity with her time and wisdom over the few days we spent together in Evanston were crucial to the production of this manuscript. The student participants of the Summer Institute at Northwestern have my deepest gratitude as well. Though there are too many to be listed here, the perspectives and ideas they brought to the study of political thought both challenged and enlightened me over the brief time we shared together.

In addition to the directors, lecturers, and participants of the Summer Institute, I would like to thank the participants of two panels, conducted in 2008 and 2009, on Hobbes's place in the history of political thought. Much of chapter IV was delivered as a conference paper at the Midwest Political Science Association meeting in 2008, and I would like to thank David Lay Williams for giving me valuable comments and the encouragement to pursue Hobbes's thoughts on political skill. When I returned to the Midwest Political Science Association the following year, I presented a paper on Hobbes's use of equity. Though the material presented there is not included in this

manuscript, I would like to thank Gregory Bruce Smith and Laura Ephraim for giving me valuable insight into Hobbes's political thought.

I would also like to thank the other scholars who have conversed with me about various tangential issues relevant to this study. Thomas Engeman, Raymond Tatalovich, and Alan Gitelson are just some of the people who helped refine my thinking, but this list is by no means complete. It also includes my students at Loyola University Chicago. I have and continue to be inspired by them, and I am grateful for the contribution they make to my studies and the joy they bring to my life.

Additionally, I would like to thank all the other people who have helped me in various ways over the last several years both inside and outside of the academy. Clay Yoksas, Char and Dick Boyell, Chris Jaffe, Sarah Skowronski, Nelson Wainwright, Tim Yetzina, Megan Sholar, Jason Reifler, John Allen Williams, Peter Sanchez, Mary Frances Lebamoff, Diane Wawrejko, Michael George McGettigan, Steven Hadesman, Teresa Negrini, Piotr Paradowski, and Meridith Bell have all played important roles in my life at the time this manuscript was being produced. I would be remiss not to mention them. Finally, I would like to thank my parents, George and Diana Yoksas, for all of their love, encouragement, and support.

For  
David S. Lindberg

## PREFACE

The seed of this project was planted in December of 2005. One month earlier, I was presenting a paper on Reinhold Niebuhr's normative contribution to international relations at the annual meeting of the Illinois Political Science Association. My plan was to follow up on my initial observations and write a work of some length on the subject. Between November and December, I had amassed a considerable bibliography of works by and about Niebuhr, as I hoped to propose a dissertation about him after submitting final grades for the fall term. In my preparations, I came across an intellectual biography of Niebuhr entitled *The Constant Dialogue* by Richard Halliwell. Niebuhr had often been criticized for being an inconsistent thinker who held various and even contradictory opinions throughout his career. Yet this was not seen by Halliwell as a defect of Niebuhr, but Niebuhr's strength as a theologian and as a critic. Niebuhr's willingness to consider perspectives other than his own helped him to respond to changing circumstances. Given that Niebuhr's career spanned two world wars, a cold war, a civil rights movement, and the general instability that occurred in American life in the late 1960's and early 1970's, Niebuhr witnessed more change than most philosophers. This made me consider what a good philosopher should do. Should a good philosopher doggedly defend his position, however untenable? Or should a good philosopher pursue the truth in light of new evidence, even when it contradicts his philosophy?



I happened to reexamine my copy of Hobbes's *Behemoth* to prepare my students' final exam. Although I had read Hobbes's Epistle Dedicatory letter to Lord Arlington several times, I read it differently this time. I realized that the statements Hobbes made in that Epistle Dedicatory were to be taken seriously, for they contained claims that seemed to propose a different sort of philosophy than the one I had previously attributed to Hobbes. It occurred to me that what I was reading was not the Hobbes I was taught, but a different Hobbes, and one that I would have never considered had I been operating under the assumption that a good philosopher should never write anything that even remotely challenges his previous statements. Hobbes, like Niebuhr, had experienced change throughout his career. Specifically, within Hobbes's own lifetime, England went from a relatively stable commonwealth under James I, to a tumultuous commonwealth plagued by civil war, to another relatively stable monarchy under Charles II.

At that point, I knew that I had to explore this Hobbes from *Behemoth's* Epistle Dedicatory. In a sense, the subject chose me more than I chose the subject, simply because it was too important not to consider. This lends credibility to Max Weber's notion that ideas have a volition all their own, and they pursue their authors more than their authors pursue them.

A. Yoksas

March 1, 2010

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the possibility that Thomas Hobbes's post-Restoration writings have a teaching that is somewhat different than the teaching contained in his scientific treatises. Specifically, Hobbes seems to express doubt in his dialogues that his science as outlined in *Leviathan* and elsewhere is a realistic solution to the problems of the commonwealth. His knowledge of the English Civil War and the peace that followed may have been instrumental in reorienting Hobbes towards a more pragmatic and realistic philosophy that recognized the limits of science to create stability in the political arena. The Hobbes of the dialogues seems to focus his attention on leadership as the means by which a commonwealth can be well governed, which is a departure from the more formal program of institutional reform that he proposed in his science.

## CHAPTER I

### HOBBS'S DIALOGUES AS A RE-EVALUATION

On the surface, Thomas Hobbes's philosophy seems inapplicable to our present political circumstances. Unlike Hobbes, we live in an era where hardly anyone believes in the divine right of kings or the legitimacy of absolute rule. Instead, we see our common good juxtaposed to the power of rulers rather than flowing from strong sovereign power. As James Madison observed, we tend to regard strong monarchy "as the source of danger," watching "with all the jealousy which a zeal for liberty ought to inspire."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it would seem that a defense of absolute kingship would be inapplicable to our times except as a relic of a far less enlightened age: an age when absolute dominion was justified on the basis of title, superstition, and blind tradition.

Given how far we have come from that archaic soil, it would seem pointless to consider the thoughts that came out of that era, and doubly pointless when the thoughts we find promote a political system so antithetical to our core political beliefs. In his history of the English Civil War, or *Behemoth*, Hobbes seems to defend a political institution that we have long since abandoned: absolute monarchy. What makes Hobbes's work even more unpalatable is *Behemoth's* central figure, King Charles I, whose actions were so inexcusable to his own people that they beheaded him in the

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<sup>1</sup> *Federalist 48*. Taken from Bernard Bailyn's *Debate on the Constitution: Federalist Speeches, Articles, and Letters During the Struggle over Ratification*, Vol. II. New York: Library of America, 1993, 137.

twenty-fifth year of his reign. It is easy for us in our time to understand why, as Charles I refused to call Parliament for a decade and levied taxes without the consent of the governed. If anything, the fact that the English people rebelled against Charles I shows us that our current political sensibilities might be more compatible with them than we would initially assume. However, it remains to be seen if *Behemoth* is solely a defense of Charles I, or if it contains a deeper message that is far more interesting and relevant for the politics of our time.

### **Section 1: Hobbes's *Behemoth* and the Problem of Good Administration**

Hobbes was not the last political thinker to defend an unpopular sovereign. Lincoln Steffens, a reporter for the *New York Evening Post*, was one of the leading voices against machine politics in early twentieth century America. In 1904, a series of articles he wrote on the corruption of urban politics would be compiled into *The Shame of the Cities*, one of the first works of urban political commentary produced in America. Not one year before, Steffens was working as a columnist at *McClure's* magazine when he took on a new challenge. Already having a reputation for exposing corruption in local politics in cities such as Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York City, Steffens usually counseled the people to rise up and overthrow the incumbent politicians at the ballot box. Yet in 1903, Steffens would act differently and write in support of an incumbent New York City mayor in a desperate electoral struggle.

Having served for only one term on a reform ticket, Mayor Seth Low was under attack by the extremely popular and Tammany Hall supported candidate George B.

McClellan, Jr. In his article, “New York, Good Government in Danger,” Steffens argued that the mayoral election of 1903 was a microcosm of “what has become a national question: good government.”<sup>2</sup> In Steffens’s mind, good government was found in the approach of a mayor like Seth Low: an approach that was beneficial—yet fragile—and dangerously susceptible to overthrow at the ballot box.

In many ways, Hobbes’s *Behemoth* appears to be a defense of Charles I’s regime in the same sense as Steffens’s article is a defense of Seth Low’s administration. The difference is that Steffens appealed to the public in the midst of a failing regime while Hobbes commented on a regime that had already failed. What both can agree upon is that good government is in a fragile condition susceptible to popular overthrow.

Character A from *Behemoth* not only remarked that Charles I was “the best king,” but also characterized Charles I as a tragic victim, “having first been persecuted by war, at the indictment of the Presbyterian ministers.”<sup>3</sup> What is curious to note is how little A justifies his assessment of Charles I as “the best king,” and the reason for this may be that the quality of the sovereign as an administrator has very little to do with a sovereign’s longevity. Hobbes makes clear that despite possessing a near-absolute constitutional prerogative, Charles I was just as susceptible to public opinion as a popularly elected representative of the people. As *Behemoth*’s character A would say, “the power of the

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<sup>2</sup> The article used here is a reprint of that original article from McClure’s that constitutes the last chapter of Steffens’s *Shame of the Cities* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), p. 195.

<sup>3</sup> The edition of *Behemoth* used is from *Behemoth, or The Long Parliament*, 3rd Edition, edited by Ferdinand Tönnies (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990), hereafter cited as *Behemoth*. *Behemoth*, p. 95.

mighty hath no foundation but in the opinion and belief of the people,”<sup>4</sup> inferring that the legitimacy of all political leaders, from absolute kings to municipal clerks, is dependent on popular opinion. Both Steffens and Hobbes seem to point to a universal problem in politics: good administration alone does not secure sovereignty. The problem that good administrators face is that the very qualities that provide for good administration may have very little to do with the qualities that determine success or failure in the political arena.

What made Steffens admire Low as a model executive was a combination of his honesty and ability. Seth Low was already a man of means and reputation. Coming from a wealthy trade family in New York City, Low did not depend on patronage from the ruling machine for his livelihood. Having served as both the president of Columbia University and the mayor of Brooklyn, Low had already built up considerable administrative experience. He was a Republican, but was elected as Mayor on a fusion ticket that included Democrats left outside of the Tammany Hall system. Steffens described Low as “what the whole country has been looking for in all municipal crises—the non-political ruler.”<sup>5</sup> What made Low’s administration refreshing for Steffens was how little partisan politics influenced it after the election was decided. In Steffens’s opinion, Low’s reputation as a non-political ruler was a result of his dedication to the public business as opposed to the party’s business. He writes that Low “began his mayoralty with a study of the affairs of New York; he has said himself that he devoted

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Steffens (1992), p. 202.



eight months to its finances: and he mastered this department and is admitted to be the master in detail of every department which has engaged his attention. In other words, Mr. Low has learned the business of New York; he is just about competent now to become the mayor of a great city.”<sup>6</sup> In Steffens’s opinion, Seth Low did what we would hope all public officials would do: he learned the public business, did the public business, and did so in service to the common good rather than serving partisan interests.

Similarly, A describes Charles I’s admirable qualities early on in *Behemoth*. He portrays the late king as “a man that wanted no virtue, either of body or mind, nor endeavoured anything more than to discharge his duty towards God, in the well governing of his subjects.”<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Hobbes established in *Behemoth* that if Charles I had faults, they did not stem from his character and ability as an administrator. The King’s absolute prerogative certainly gave Charles I the power to assert his will over the people of England. Nevertheless, A maintains that Charles I used his power justly, for the common good of all his subjects, and not in favor of one political faction over another. Setting aside the actions and advice of the king’s advisors,<sup>8</sup> Hobbes seemed to portray Charles I as a sovereign who governed England as an administrative exercise detached from the political considerations that turn government as a means to aggrandize the sovereign’s friends.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 200.

<sup>7</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> This is in reference to the advice of the Archbishop of Canterbury to send “a book of Common-prayer into Scotland,” (ibid., p. 28). In his introduction to *Behemoth*, Steven Holmes acknowledges that “Regret about the prayer-book episode is the closest Hobbes comes to admitting that royal misgovernment, rather than insubordination among miseducated subjects, led to the breakdown of authority,” (ibid., p. xli).

This is similar to the way Steffens portrayed Seth Low, who was described as someone who ran the affairs of New York City as “business, not politics.”<sup>9</sup> We must be careful to understand what business in opposition to politics means in this case. Low saw the mayor’s business as limited to the chartered duties of the office, fulfilling these duties efficiently for the good of all New Yorkers, rather than for his political supporters only. Tammany, however, saw the business of government differently. Its conception of the official’s business was to secure the vote, and once the vote was secured, to milk the city dry by means of graft in line with what Steffens called “the commercial spirit” or “the spirit of profit, not patriotism; of credit, not honor; of individual gain, not national prosperity; of trade and dickering, not principle. ‘My business is sacred,’ says the business man in his heart. ‘Whatever prospers my business, is good; it must be. Whatever hinders it is wrong; it must be.’”<sup>10</sup> Steffens understood that Low faced a Tammany opposition that was shrewd in a sense that good administrators were not, for “Tammany’s democratic corruption rests upon the corruption of the people.”<sup>11</sup> Unlike Low’s reform administration, Steffens observed Tammany’s shrewdness in moving the passions of the public, understood Tammany’s ability to “study the people,”<sup>12</sup> and understood how Tammany moved the people to vote for them on Election Day. Knowing that factions in the electorate generally placed their private self-interests ahead of the

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<sup>9</sup> Steffens (1992), p. 126.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

public interest, Tammany won votes through “kindness and petty privileges.”<sup>13</sup> The kindness took the form of Tammany’s charismatic leadership, found in candidates who were “usually the natural leaders of the people in these districts, and they are originally good-natured, kindly men.”<sup>14</sup> The petty privileges came in the form of gifts, patronage jobs, and even “violations of the law” in the form of avoiding fines as rewards for loyalty.<sup>15</sup> According to Steffens, Tammany Hall’s tactics were forms of “corruption with consent” as the people of New York were at least partially—if not wholly—culpable for the corruption that preceded Low’s administration.

Hobbes seemed to identify Charles I’s opposition in a similar way to the way Steffen’s described Tammany Hall. *Behemoth* portrayed the king’s opponents in the Long Parliament as shrewd political tacticians who proceeded against Charles I “like skillful hunters; first to single him out, by men disposed in all parts to drive him into the open field.”<sup>16</sup> The reasons the Long Parliament was so successful were twofold. First, the Long Parliament delivered its message by way of speeches in assemblies or congregations. Using the power of the podium and pulpit, the king’s enemies used mass spectacle to their advantage, for as B observed, “it is easier to gull the multitude, than any one man amongst them.”<sup>17</sup> Understanding how to appeal to the people by way of

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>16</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 36.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

conscience or the love of material gain,<sup>18</sup> the Long Parliament was able to build up a strong coalition against Charles I.

*Behemoth* offers a second reason for the Long Parliament's success: the rebellious disposition of the people of England. From the insurrection orchestrated by the Long Parliament, to Oliver Cromwell's machinations, to the ambitious maneuvering of Thomas Fairfax, *Behemoth* is filled with examples of elites who know how to gain political support. What is useful to observe from a political standpoint is how these ambitious elites were able to be so persuasive, for as A observed, "ambition can do little without hands, and few hands it would have, if the common people were as diligently instructed in the true principles of their duty, as they were terrified and amazed by preachers."<sup>19</sup> One wonders if either the loyalists or the rebels were even motivated by religion at all, for if A is correct, "there were very few of the common people that cared much for either of the causes, but would have taken any side for pay or plunder."<sup>20</sup> Perhaps A characterizes the disposition of Charles I's subjects best when he claims that "the people were corrupted generally, and disobedient persons esteemed the best patriots."<sup>21</sup> When we examine the disposition of the people of England, we discover that the same disposition that brought about the English Civil War was also the one that made political machines such as Tammany Hall so successful. Both were manifestations of what

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<sup>18</sup> B makes the observation that a king's "subjects will hardly be drawn into the field and fight with courage against their consciences." A responds to this observation by asserting that "there are few whose consciences are so tender as to refuse money when they want it" (ibid., p. 18).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 70-71.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 2.

Steffens called “corruption with consent,” or the general proclivity of the public to favor private advantage over prudent administration.

While Low was not corrupt, he suffered from a different failing: a lack of charisma. Steffens admits that Low’s “personality ... is not very engaging,” and that he appears “cold and impersonal.”<sup>22</sup> The irony of Low was that his aloof personality traits were the very traits that, for Steffens, made Low a good administrator. Steffens has no qualms when describing Low’s want of tact, because “Mr. Low’s very faults . . . make it impossible for him to be a politician even if he should wish to be. As for his selfishness, his lack of tact, his coldness—these are of no consequence. He has done his duty all the better for them. Admit that he is uninteresting; what does that matter? He has served the city. Will the city not vote for him because it does not like the way he smiles? Absurd as it sounds, that is what all I have heard against Low amounts to.”<sup>23</sup> Steffens understood that the duties of the modern executive are outside of the public eye. Few citizens in our age will ever see a staff meeting, the work that goes into creating a budget, or the effort that goes into various acts of public policy. For the most part, the duties of the executive are outside public scrutiny and require the temperament of a manager more than the charisma of an orator. The tragic fact of the executive is that he or she cannot help but be an object of public scrutiny and will often be judged by the public on whatever public persona the executive presents. For all of his diligence at learning how to govern a great city, Low’s success at administration made him a failure at politics, or at least a failure in

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 200-201.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 202.

the eyes of citizens who could not see the administrative competence Seth Low exemplified.

Like Seth Low, Charles I suffered from a lack of skill in public relations. *Behemoth* describes a series of early scandals, missteps, and concessions that ultimately undermined the late king's credibility as a strong and capable monarch. The mishaps start with Dr. William Laud, the Archbishop of Canterbury under Charles I, who "sent down a book of Common-prayer into Scotland, not differing in substance from ours, nor much in words besides the putting to the word Presbyter for that of Minister, commanding it to be used . . . by the ministers there, for an ordinary form of Divine service."<sup>24</sup> This "caused such a tumult" in Edinburgh that the Scottish nobility made a covenant "to put down episcopacy, without consulting with the King." This forced the king to call a Parliament for the first time in ten years to raise money to field an army. Additionally, "the King, willing to avoid the destruction of his own subjects, condescended" to a peaceful resolution brokered by Parliament. Though the legitimacy of Charles I would suffer somewhat, "the issue was peace; and the King thereupon went to Edinburgh, and passed an Act of Parliament there to [the Scots and Parliament's] satisfaction."

If the goal of a Hobbesian sovereign is to keep the peace, one could say that Charles I acted as a good sovereign in the case of the Scottish uprising, as his motives were in accord with *salus populi*, or the safety and well-being of the people. Yet the solution to the Scottish uprising had consequences that would later undermine Charles I's

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<sup>24</sup> This and the following passages refer to *Behemoth*, pp. 28-30.

ability to act as sovereign. As A said, “to the end the King might buy the Parliament’s help at no less a price than sovereignty itself,” and while the threat of a violent uprising in Scotland was temporarily thwarted, the incident did nothing to quell the general feeling of discontent within Presbyterian congregations in both England and Scotland. Those who were aggrieved sent “a certain paper” which A claimed was “false and scandalous . . . which was by the King’s command burnt.” Though Charles I imprisoned “three persons that had been condemned for publishing” the “seditious doctrine . . . the Parliament . . . caused them to be released and to return to London.”<sup>25</sup> Rather than charge the three conspirators who published the scandalous paper, Parliament accused Sir Thomas Wentworth, “the Earl of Strafford and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, of high-treason.” The reason the trial of the Earl of Strafford was worthy of note is that Wentworth was far more loyal to Charles I than his accusers were. Though “before the year 1640,” the “Lord of Strafford did appear in opposition to the King’s demands as much as any man,” Wentworth is described as rather critical of Parliament’s encroachment on the king’s prerogative to enforce the laws. Even though by A’s recollection, treason “was never proved against him,”<sup>26</sup> Thomas Wentworth was nevertheless sentenced to death. As sovereign monarch, Charles I could have used his office to pardon the Earl of Strafford, but did not exercise this power for fear that the pardon might cause an insurrection. As A recalls, Charles I “had heard all that passed at [Wentworth’s] trial, and declared himself unsatisfied concerning the justice of their [the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

members of Parliament] sentence.” The king, “notwithstanding the danger of his own person from the fury of the people” was “counseled to give way to his [Wentworth’s] execution, not only by such as he [Charles I] most relied on, but by the Earl of Strafford himself.”<sup>27</sup> A recalls that the king “would have pardoned” Wentworth “if that could have preserved him [Charles I] against the tumult raised and countenanced by the Parliament itself, for terrifying of those they thought might favor him. And yet the King himself did not stick to confess afterwards, that he had done amiss, in that he did not rescue him.”<sup>28</sup>

As much as Charles I endeavored to act against his better judgment for the sake of the peace, his actions had the opposite effect. In his attempt to show his subjects that he would not use his prerogative to favor one citizen over another, Charles I actually weakened his own legitimacy as sovereign. In his attempt to demonstrate his lack of favoritism, Charles I favored Parliament, but not because of the merits of Parliament’s claim. Charles I capitulated to Parliament to appease it, but Parliament would not be appeased for long. The Wentworth trial showed Parliament that demands backed by the threat of insurrection proved to be an effective means of manipulating the king, and the demands on Charles I increased, each one more unreasonable and threatening than the last. In a statement more reminiscent of Machiavelli than Thomas Hobbes, A explains to B “that those princes that with preferment are forced to buy the obedience of their subjects, are already, or must be soon after, in a very weak condition.”<sup>29</sup> Charles I was a

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 72.



capable administrator, and was for the most part resistant to corruption. Yet like Seth Low, Charles I was unaware of the political ramifications of his actions. Charles I desired the support of the people, but he did not understand how to obtain it. His attempts to gain the support of the people, such as the decision he made in the Wentworth trial, made him out an object of contempt rather than a strong sovereign. In spite of the late king's beneficence, or perhaps because of it, Charles I was deposed by those who had the ambition, tenacity, and political skill that the late king lacked. If a monarch with the sort of power and prerogative Charles I possessed was so vulnerable, what can we say about the vulnerability of the modern elected executive?

In a representative democracy, we would hope that politicians place the public business ahead of the desire to be well liked. In the early twentieth century, many social scientists used the then-novel structure of the corporation as a model for how civil government could function. Max Weber saw the developments in professional civil service as “quite similar” to the developments he observed in private enterprise.<sup>30</sup> Like Steffens, Weber saw the prominence of the “expert official” as the defining characteristic that separated modern politics from earlier forms. The official's expertise and bureaucratic demeanor insulated the modern administrator from most political considerations, as he was judged on his ability to govern “without regard to persons” or “the leveling of status ‘honor’” rather than his skill in favoring one faction over

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<sup>30</sup> “After all, things in a private economic enterprise are quite similar: the real ‘sovereign,’ the assembled shareholders, is just as little influential in the business management as the ‘people’ ruled by expert officials.” In a rather cynical and humorous development in this analogy, Weber states, “thus the present structure of the revolutionary state signifies nothing new in principle. It places power over the administration into the hands of absolute dilettantes, who, by virtue of their control of the machine-guns, would like to use expert officials only as executive heads and hands.” See H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 91-92.

another.<sup>31</sup> However, Weber also observed that America tended to govern itself using “amateur administration through booty politicians,” and was only beginning to value the sort of professional demeanor described by Steffens.<sup>32</sup> The bulk of large municipal governments in the early decades of the twentieth century America tended to be governed by patronage organizations such as Tammany, which Steffens called “the embodiment of corruption.”<sup>33</sup> Unlike the mayoral administration of Seth Low, Steffens claimed that patronage organizations such as Tammany Hall were “out for themselves and their own; not for the public, but for ‘me and my friends’; not for New York, but for Tammany.”<sup>34</sup>

By contrast, Low’s administration represented something different: a foray into what Steffens believed was a new paradigm in how politicians ought to be judged by the voters. Yet Steffens realized the system cannot be changed overnight, since “it will take time to evolve the masters of the . . . unstudied art of municipal government – time and demand. So far there has been no market for municipal experts in this country. All we are clamoring for today in our meek, weak-hearted way, is the mean, rudimentary virtue

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<sup>31</sup> Translation of *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* part III as found in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, p. 215. See also p. 199: “Entrance into an office, including one in the private economy, is considered an acceptance of a specific obligation of faithful management in return for a secure existence.”

<sup>32</sup> Translation of “*Politik als Beruf* (Politics as a Vocation)” as found in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, p. 88. The full passage reads as follows: “In the United States, amateur administration through booty politicians in accordance with the outcome of presidential elections resulted in the exchange of hundreds of thousands of officials, even down to the mail carrier. The administration knew nothing of the professional civil-servant-for-life, but this amateur administration has long since been punctured by the Civil Service Reform. Purely technical, irrefragable needs of the administration have determined this development.” It should be noted that Weber wrote this in 1918, fourteen years after *The Shame of the Cities*.

<sup>33</sup> Steffens (1992), p. 203.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

miscalled ‘common honesty.’”<sup>35</sup> In a political system that trusts voters to decide who governs, fair administration will only occur if the voters value it. This implies that the voters are able to identify good administration as separate from good political showmanship. As knowledge of good administration does not come naturally, both the public officials and the voters need to be educated to understand and appreciate good administration. Impressed with the level of expertise found in the European municipal courts, Steffens believed that New York’s problems could only be solved when the voters chose candidates who promoted the public good rather than private advantage or base sentimentality. Steffens seemed to imply that this might not have been possible at the time he wrote his article. To their detriment, the voters of New York City tended to be too influenced by appearance and too quick to turn a blind eye to corruption for the sake of private advantage. This is the so-called “common honesty” which Steffens described: a notion of justice that in the words of one Tammany official could be summarized as, “every good man looks after his friends, and any man who doesn’t, isn’t likely to be popular.”<sup>36</sup> Democracy at its worst resembled little more than a popularity contest, and the challenge Steffens proposed to New York City was to make prudent administration popular.

One would suspect that an undemocratic political system would be far less vulnerable to developing into a popularity contest amongst friends. Surprisingly, Hobbes’s *Behemoth* shows us that even absolute monarchs are not immune to the

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>36</sup> This is a quote from George Washington Plunkitt, taken from William Riordon’s *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*, Edited by Terrence McDonald (Boston, MA: Bedford Books, 1994), p. 51.

problems caused by the sort of “common honesty” described by Steffens. At one point in *Behemoth*, character A wonders “why may not men be taught their duty, that is, the science of *Just* and *Unjust*, as diverse other sciences have been taught, from the principles and evident demonstration; and much more easily taught than any of those preachers and democratical gentlemen could teach rebellion and treason?”<sup>37</sup> Like Steffens, A believed that the quality of administration depended upon the ability of the people to recognize and support good administration when it presented itself.

It is theoretically possible that this could be accomplished through education. If the people could understand that rulers should be strictly limited to the responsibility they have been given, to serve the interests of the whole, the people would be less inclined to see rulers as a vehicle to serve their interests at the expense of the whole. However, there are limits to education as a solution, limits that A admits in *Behemoth*. Although “the rules of just and unjust . . . from principles evident to the meanest capacity, have not been wanting” and “have shined . . . to men of good education,” these men “are few, in respect of the rest of men, whereof many cannot read: many, though they can, have no leisure; and of them that have leisure, the greatest part have their minds wholly employed and taken up by their private business or pleasures.”<sup>38</sup> This passage would seem to run

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<sup>37</sup> This and the following passage are from *Behemoth*, p. 39.

<sup>38</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 39. Robert Kraynak proposed that the most serious problem the commonwealth faced was for Hobbes the tendency for the citizens to be persuaded by “doctrinal politics,” or the “artificial concern for general or abstract principles in the form of opinions and doctrines of right,” (p. 37). Read in this way, *Behemoth* “calls for the reform of the universities and the introduction of [Hobbes’s] own political teaching, which [Hobbes] claims is the ‘true science of equity and justice,’” (p. 63). See Robert Kraynak’s *History and Modernity in the Thought of Thomas Hobbes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990). While *Behemoth*’s A undoubtedly believed that the universities were responsible for promulgating

contrary to the notion that Hobbes saw education as a practical solution to the problems of the commonwealth. Although there are several passages throughout *Behemoth* that condemn the universities for causing sedition and creating bad doctrine, one wonders how effective university reform might have been in solving the problems of civil war and bad administration. At best, reforming the universities would be a long-term solution, and at worst, no practical solution at all. Even if scholars, ministers, and elected officials could have been moved to adopt a more enlightened perspective on politics, it would have taken a generation or perhaps several generations for the basic habits and attitudes of the body politic to reflect that change. In addition, there would be many more citizens who would not learn, or be in a position to be taught. Moreover, there was no guarantee that those in a position of authority actually wanted a politically astute population, especially if a highly educated public demanded accountability from those in a position of authority over them. *Behemoth's* B states the problem quite clearly, for “if any man have been so singular, as to have studied the science of Justice and equity; how can he teach it safely, when it is against the interest of those that are in possession of the power to hurt him?”<sup>39</sup> This question is never satisfactorily answered in *Behemoth*, which may indicate that the problems in politics cannot be solved satisfactorily through formal education alone. Like Steffens, Hobbes seemed to have stumbled upon a problem that all political reformers face: good administration cannot sustain itself solely on its goodness. It requires public support, but the public is not naturally disposed to recognize and

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sedition doctrine, the question of whether this solution was practical or not is the subject that is answered in chapter III.

<sup>39</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 39.

support good administration when it presents itself. The most obvious solution is to educate the public to recognize and value good administration, but there is no guarantee that the public is willing or even able to be persuaded to see the value of good administration. While this may be the most obvious solution to the problem, it is neither the only solution nor perhaps even the best solution.

The other solution is to make the good administrator a better politician. In other words, good public administrators should study ambitious and skillful political rulers who were able to sustain political power through political skill, which is somewhat different from administrative competence. This is Machiavelli's solution, and when Hobbes alludes to the dialogue between the characters in *Behemoth*, it reflects a different approach from that of the Hobbes we traditionally encounter in his political treatises.

This comparison between Hobbes's history of the English Civil War and Lincoln Steffens's plea to the citizens of New York reveals a common problem in politics, a problem that is not limited to regimes of any particular stripe or historical time period. If they are to survive, political leaders have to be more than competent administrators. They must also be shrewd politicians who cannot ever take for granted that their constituents will truly see and appreciate administrative competence when practiced. Therefore, rulers of all types need to have the means to protect themselves through a shrewd political sense, and good administrators must develop a shrewd political sense most of all as their skills are vital to the success of the regime.

Could *Behemoth* be a book of practical wisdom, designed to instruct good sovereigns how to survive in a contested political arena? Just as Lincoln Steffens

admired Seth Low for his willingness to put good administration above political considerations, *Behemoth's* A admired Charles I for his basic goodness. However, the very qualities that made both Seth Low and Charles I good men made them extremely vulnerable to overthrow, particularly from shrewd and charismatic politicians that placed more stock in political advantage than unbiased administration strictly limited to the good of all.

Of course, *Leviathan* proposes a system of government that rewards and protects good rulers and proposes that the citizens of the commonwealth have the power to create such a system for the sake of eliminating the state of war. Unlike *Leviathan*, however, *Behemoth* portrays an actual sovereign exercising his sovereign powers. When sovereignty is analyzed in this way, it no longer seems like a simple list of administrative tasks. Instead, sovereignty takes on a human dimension that includes the interpersonal and charismatic qualities of the sovereign, qualities that do not come from the office as much as from the official. This is not a theme that resonates strongly in *Leviathan*, but as we will see, it is a theme that resonates rather strongly in Hobbes's post-*Leviathan* dialogues.

## Section 2: Research Question

A recent Hobbes scholar once claimed that “no one can read Hobbes's political treatises without coming away with the sense that Hobbes wanted something to change.”<sup>40</sup> The English Civil War and the political uncertainty associated with it

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<sup>40</sup> Vaughan, Geoffrey M., *Behemoth Teaches Leviathan* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2002), p. 1.

provided the impetus for Hobbes's *Leviathan*. Hobbes mentions this explicitly in *Leviathan*'s "Review and Conclusion" by stating that his discourse was "occasioned by the disorders of the present time,"<sup>41</sup> which for Hobbes were the events of the English Civil War. It seems only natural that, in such a desperate time, Hobbes would seek a new solution—a modern solution—to create the peace that traditional political philosophy seemed unable to create, and Hobbes would deliver his modern solution in its final form in 1651. Widely considered to be Hobbes's definitive work, *Leviathan* is modern in terms of its method and its message. The resolute-compositive method Hobbes used in constructing *Leviathan* was borrowed from the natural sciences, and its application to human phenomena constituted a radical break with the previous tradition of understanding politics through historical analysis and disputation.<sup>42</sup> *Leviathan*'s message was also modern, testifying to the presence of natural rights, the primacy of individual self-interest in political decision-making, and the contractual nature of political relationships.<sup>43</sup> Whether or not the modern message of *Leviathan* was a result of its modern method, *Leviathan* was an important—if not *the* most important—book of modern social science.

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<sup>41</sup> Taken from Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* ed. C.B. Macpherson (London: Penguin Group, 1985), p. 728; cited hereafter as *Leviathan*, part.chapter.page.

<sup>42</sup> For an explanation of Hobbes's application of the natural sciences, see J.W.N. Watkins's *Hobbes's System of Ideas* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1965); and M. M. Goldsmith's, *Hobbes's Science of Politics* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1966).

<sup>43</sup> For an explanation of Hobbes's theory of natural rights, see Leo Strauss's chapter on Hobbes in *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 165-202. A discussion of the role of individual self-interest in Hobbes's thought can be found in C.B. Macpherson's *Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 87-106. Explanations of Hobbes's contribution to social contract theory can be found in David Gauthier's "The Social Contract as Ideology," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 6, no. 2 (1977), pp. 130-164; and Jean Hampton's *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).



Given the long shadow that *Leviathan* casts upon the history of political thought, we as readers of Hobbes tend to read his other works in the shadow of *Leviathan*.

However, great authors tend to refine their ideas over the course of their lives. There are reasons why authors re-evaluate their ideas. The author may want to consider new knowledge that was not available for earlier works. Moreover, the author may become aware of possible points of criticism that the earlier works may not have addressed.

Perhaps the most important reason why an author would want to re-evaluate his ideas is when an author writes a text in response to a particular set of historical circumstances.

When these circumstances change, the changing circumstances may cause an author to gain a new and previously unavailable perspective that the author wishes to incorporate into another work, one that is more complete than the author's previous works.

If there was any author who bore witness to changing circumstances, it was Thomas Hobbes. From the period of time when he wrote *The Elements of Law* in 1640 to his death in 1679, England went from a failing monarchy under Charles I, through a period of civil war, to a period of re-established order under Charles II. While it is a matter of common knowledge that the English Civil War provided the impetus for much of Hobbes's political thought, he wrote his actual history of the war in 1668, almost two decades after *Leviathan* was first published and eight years after the restoration of the monarchy under Charles II. Given that Hobbes wrote his dialogues after the English Civil War, is *Behemoth* simply a restatement of the same philosophy Hobbes previously produced, or does *Behemoth* approach political questions in a different way?

This study is an attempt to show that Hobbes's conclusions in *Behemoth* and other dialogues are somewhat different from his conclusions in *Leviathan*. Specifically, Hobbes seems to take a realistic approach and starts to question whether his political science is a practical solution to the problems of the commonwealth. Hobbes turns to a new solution to the problems of the commonwealth: political skill as opposed to political science. By closely examining the dialogues Hobbes wrote, we are able to see why he came to this conclusion. In order for Hobbes's science to serve as a solution to civil war, it requires ideal political and social conditions that did not exist in the time of the rebellion against Charles I. Yet despite these conditions, the English Civil War ended, the Restoration held, and Hobbes's science as outlined in his political science treatises cannot explain why.

Political skill, however, *can* explain how the civil war ended. Conversely, a lack of political skill also explains why the civil war started in the first place. This study will show how Hobbes went about this re-evaluation of his project, and will conclude with his revised teaching about sovereignty that is more reminiscent of Machiavelli than of the scientific Hobbes we understand from the treatises. This post-Restoration Hobbes of the dialogues is not altogether different from the pre-Restoration Hobbes of the treatises, and the difference between these two phases of Hobbes's career is a difference of degree rather than kind. However, the degrees that separate the two phases of Hobbes's career are meaningful enough to warrant a re-evaluation of Hobbes in much the same way as he re-evaluated himself through his dialogues.

### Section 3: Literature Survey

It is useful to see how the scholarly community has considered *Behemoth* and other late writings to better understand this alternative conception of Hobbes. *Behemoth* was Hobbes's last published work on political matters and one of the last works that Hobbes scholars seriously considered. 1889 saw the introduction of what is widely considered to be the authoritative text that was rescued and transcribed by Ferdinand Tönnies from the St. John's College manuscript.<sup>44</sup> Though several editions of *Behemoth* were published before the Tönnies edition,<sup>45</sup> it was never considered an important part of Hobbes's philosophical canon like *Leviathan* or *De Cive*. The lack of interest in Hobbes's *Behemoth* prompted Royce MacGillivray to conclude in 1970 that "*Behemoth* seems to have had surprisingly little influence at any time."<sup>46</sup> When examining the twentieth century literature, one will notice three rough phases in *Behemoth* scholarship.

In the first phase, scholars viewed *Behemoth* as a supplement to Hobbes's scientific project, not a part of Hobbes's scientific project. Read as little more than an appendix to *Leviathan*, *Behemoth* provided interesting case studies that were intended to clarify Hobbes's more formal teachings. Therefore, Hobbes scholars of the first phase assumed that *Behemoth* did not add anything new to our understanding of Hobbes's political philosophy or political epistemology. Until the late 1970's, *Behemoth* was traditionally read as a study intended to add credibility to Hobbes's theoretical works:

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<sup>44</sup> The provenance of the various editions of *Behemoth* can be found in *Behemoth*, pp. vii-xi.

<sup>45</sup> Most notably the Molesworth edition in *English Works*, vol. VI.

<sup>46</sup> See Royce MacGillivray's "Thomas Hobbes's History of the English Civil War: A Study of *Behemoth*," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 31, no. 2 (1970), p. 182.

specifically *Leviathan*, but also *De Corpore*, *De Cive*, *Elements of Law*, and the like. Most of the prominent scholars of Hobbes at the time—M.M. Goldsmith, Leo Strauss, and C.B. Macpherson—read *Behemoth* in this way.

For Goldsmith, *Behemoth* adds no claims Hobbes did not already make in his previous treatises. Rather, Hobbes uses the historical facts of the Civil War in *Behemoth* as evidence for the validity of his more sophisticated political treatises, showing that “the rights pretended by the King’s opponents turn out to be based on the doctrines that are contradicted by Hobbes’s political doctrines.”<sup>47</sup> Goldsmith believed that Hobbes used history as a way “to exhibit the consequences of not following the correct, Hobbesian, science of politics.”<sup>48</sup> Read in this way, *Behemoth* is simply an historical investigation by Hobbes, not a scientific one. If we are to classify Hobbes’s works into discrete categories not intended to overlap, then *Behemoth* does not itself contain the Hobbesian science of politics, though it may lead an inquiring mind to approach it.

Strauss’s interpretation of *Behemoth* in his early work on Hobbes is, for the most part, very traditional. His consideration of *Behemoth* was sparse, but powerful, as Strauss believed the “significance of Hobbes’s morals comes out most clearly in one of his latest works, in *Behemoth*.”<sup>49</sup> In Strauss’s view, *Behemoth* taught that the emerging middle class “supported by the Presbyterian clergy was the natural vehicle for the Revolution.” In Strauss’s view, Hobbes’s *Behemoth* showed how the middle class was “acting against

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<sup>47</sup> Goldsmith (1966), p. 237.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 252.

<sup>49</sup> I shall refer to the reprint of the 1936 edition from Clarendon Press as found in *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 116.

its own real interest”<sup>50</sup> by undermining the very security that allowed the middle class to acquire wealth without impediment. Strauss believed that *Behemoth* was Hobbes’s argument to place the responsibility for the English Civil War wholly upon the yeomanry and the burgesses of the growing middle class. Furthermore, Strauss shows how Hobbes used *Behemoth* to demonstrate that the English Civil War was motivated by perverse motives out of step with those that would be considered typical of the middle class interests that pursued the war. Strauss suggests that Hobbes may have wanted to inform the middle class of the grave implications of its decision to rebel against the absolute authority of the sovereign. Instead, Hobbes offered an alternative that was more in step with the character of the middle class: to pursue “the security of body and soul, which the bourgeoisie cannot of itself guarantee.”<sup>51</sup>

Strauss was not the last figure to use *Behemoth* as evidence for Hobbes’s interest in middle class values. In *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, C.B. Macpherson shows how modern liberalism had its origin in the early English enlightenment period. Richard Ashcraft described Macpherson’s interpretation of *Behemoth* as Marxist,<sup>52</sup> showing how the theme of *Behemoth* was similar to the work of James Harrington. Macpherson argued that the theme of *Behemoth* was the same as that of Harrington’s *Oceana* as both works seemed to imply that the struggle for economic independence was the prime cause of the rebellion against Charles I. The old feudal

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp. 117-118.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>52</sup> See Robert Kraynak’s “Hobbes’s *Behemoth* and the Argument for Absolutism,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 76, no. 4 (1982), note 5, p. 838.

notions of property rights, which depended in large part on hereditary title and peerage, had been slowly giving way to new, more market oriented notions of property rights. Macpherson argued that the Civil War was important for Hobbes because it was perhaps the clearest expression of the conflict between the aristocracy and the middle class.<sup>53</sup>

The difference between Strauss's and Macpherson's interpretations of Hobbes is really a difference about whether the interests of the middle class were ultimately served by the Civil War. For Macpherson's Hobbes, the Civil War was a necessary and inevitable conflict in order to establish the principles of possessive individualism in a market based economy. For Strauss's Hobbes, the Civil War was an example of how the greater worldliness and education of the wealthy middle class did not serve to make the lot of the commoner any more prosperous or secure. Whatever their differences, both Macpherson and Strauss believed *Behemoth* was useful as a case study for understanding Hobbes's opinion of changing social norms when applied to contemporary, twentieth century notions of class interests. Like Goldsmith, neither Strauss nor Macpherson viewed *Behemoth* as Hobbes's mature teaching on politics.<sup>54</sup> *Behemoth* was read as a

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<sup>53</sup> "Hobbes saw, accurately, that this belief was no part of the formerly prevailing feudal concept of property, and that the belief had grown to the point where it could be held responsible for the Civil War" Macpherson (1962), p. 65.

<sup>54</sup> Strauss did not believe that any single work of Hobbes could be considered the superior form of Hobbes's philosophy. As he states in his chapter on Hobbes in *What is Political Philosophy?*, "none of the four or five versions of Hobbes's political philosophy (the *Elements of Law*, the *De Cive*, the English and Latin versions of the *Leviathan*, the second half of the *De Homine*) can be regarded as simply superior to the others" (p. 173). See Leo Strauss's *What is Political Philosophy?* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1988). What is interesting here is not so much the works that Strauss mentions, but what he does not mention. We know that Strauss was familiar with *Behemoth* from his previous writings. While it is inappropriate at this point to assume that Strauss considered *Behemoth* to be "superior to the others," Strauss does determine in *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* that history is as capable as philosophy, and in some ways, more capable than philosophy to teach prudence and moral precepts. Cf. Strauss (1952) pp. 80, 84, 95.

supplement *to* and a case study *for* the relevance of Hobbes's other political works, as *Behemoth* was thought not to deviate from Hobbes's former teaching in any meaningful way.

The second phase starts around the late 1970's and culminates in the 1990 publication of Robert Kraynak's *History and Modernity in the Thought of Thomas Hobbes*. At this time, scholars started to consider Hobbes's histories as important works in their own right with a purpose that is somewhat different from that of the philosophical works. The scholars of this second phase believed that only by understanding this historical Hobbes can one understand and appreciate the scientific teaching in the treatises. This new phase of *Behemoth* scholarship starts with Richard Ashcraft's 1978 observation that Thomas Hobbes's *Behemoth* had gone virtually unconsidered by scholars and that Hobbes's histories may be just as important as his treatises when understanding Hobbes's complete political project.<sup>55</sup>

Perhaps the most important and commonly cited work from this second phase of *Behemoth* scholarship is Robert Kraynak's *History and Modernity in the Thought of Thomas Hobbes*. Like Ashcraft, Kraynak argues that *Behemoth* should be read as a necessary component of Hobbes's overall philosophical project. For Kraynak, *Behemoth* becomes important in Hobbes's case as a means to resolve an underlying paradox that lies at the heart of Hobbes's project. On the one hand, Hobbes is a critic of what some have called "doctrinal politics," or "the institutionalization and popularization of

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<sup>55</sup> "In the scores of considerations of Hobbes' political theory extant, virtually no attention has been paid to his *Behemoth*." Taken from Richard Ashcraft's "Ideology and Class in Hobbes' Political Theory," *Political Theory* 6, no. 1 (1978), p. 28.

disputative philosophy.”<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, Hobbes seems to replace the doctrinal politics of his time with a doctrine of his own, possibly far more dogmatic and potentially destructive than any doctrinal teaching gleaned from scholasticism.<sup>57</sup>

The previous consensus among those who studied *Behemoth* was that Hobbes most clearly delineated his doctrinal teaching in his political treatises such as *Elements of Law*, *De Cive*, and *Leviathan*. Kraynak and Ashcraft are no exceptions to this rule, but they do observe that one cannot understand Hobbes’s political project through the political treatises alone. Ashcraft read *Behemoth* as a necessary component of Hobbes’s overall political philosophy as it “described at length” the problems associated with unenlightened popular government.<sup>58</sup> For Kraynak, “Hobbes’s historical theory, which defines the fundamental problem of civilization, must be temporally and logically prior to his political science, which explains the solution.”<sup>59</sup> Though *Behemoth* is a work of historical theory and seems to be independent of the formal treatises, such an historical theory is essential. Understanding the way philosophy abuses history is a prerequisite for science, because only by understanding how history is abused can one understand the need for an objective, universally valid science of politics starting from accurate definitions.

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<sup>56</sup> Kraynak (1990), p. 24.

<sup>57</sup> “Instead of promoting independent thinking and lasting civil peace, Hobbes’s enlightenment science inaugurates a type of doctrinal politics that leads to new kinds of mental enslavement and ideological warfare in the modern world” (ibid., p. 191).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 4.



Kraynak claims that “no other work provides so much insight into the problems of past and contemporary civil society” as *Behemoth*. While *Behemoth*’s method may differ from *Leviathan*’s, he concluded that *Behemoth* solves the problem of doctrinal politics in the same way as *Leviathan*. Kraynak interprets Hobbes’s intent in *Behemoth* as a call for “reform of the universities and the introduction of his own political teaching, which he claims is the ‘true science of equity and justice.’”<sup>60</sup> To reform the university curriculum, *Behemoth* points the reader back to the treatises, as Hobbes “must go beyond the discipline of civil history and turn to the discipline of political science in the strict and proper sense” in order to formulate practical solutions for the problems history reveals.<sup>61</sup> For Kraynak, *Behemoth* stands at the heart of Hobbes’s political project, as Hobbes’s science only becomes relevant in response to the problem raised in *Behemoth*.

The first phase scholars and the second phase scholars share a belief that Hobbes’s basic philosophic conclusions are the same throughout his canon. Though *Behemoth* described a new method of teaching political principles, the political principles Hobbes taught in *Behemoth* are the same principles taught in *Leviathan* without alteration.<sup>62</sup> Because history is necessary to justify why politics needs a science like Hobbes’s own, Kraynak contends that “regardless of its place in the chronology of

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>62</sup> This is also the conclusion in Geoffrey Vaughan’s work (2002). Vaughan argues that *Behemoth*’s intent is to provide “a new method of education” designed “to produce a docile people—a *Behemoth* and not another Long Parliament—which is capable of being turned, with sufficient skill, into a *Leviathan*. And so *Behemoth* teaches (in a transitive sense) *Leviathan*” (p. 134). The difference between Kraynak’s view and Vaughan’s view is that Kraynak maintains that *Behemoth* presents the problem *Leviathan* solves, and Vaughan maintains that *Behemoth* solves the problem of political education that *Leviathan* fails to explain fully. In both viewpoints, however, *Leviathan* and *Behemoth* are described as having complementary teachings that link the two books together into a system.

Hobbes's writings, *Behemoth* is a work of primary importance.”<sup>63</sup> However, the reason why *Behemoth* was important was not that *Behemoth*'s conclusion was different from the conclusions reached in the political treatises. *Behemoth* was important because Hobbes defined the political problem far more clearly there than anywhere else in his writings.

The main contribution of this second wave of scholarship was to show the importance of understanding the historical Hobbes in order to understand the philosophical Hobbes more clearly. Through the historical works, we discover why Hobbes's philosophy is necessary, but the historical works exist merely as a prelude to Hobbes's political thought, and do not constitute Hobbes's political science solely. It would take other authors to make the case that *Behemoth* is a work that needs to be read on its own terms as a dialogue. Read with respect to the form, the teaching contained in *Behemoth* is only apparent when considering the manner in which Hobbes presents it.

The third phase starts with Noam Flinker's 1989 article "View from the 'Devil's Mountain'" and includes one of the more recent contributions to *Behemoth* scholarship: Geoffrey Vaughan's 2002 book *Behemoth Teaches Leviathan*. Like the second phase interpreters, these latest contributions place *Behemoth* at the center of Hobbes's canon. Unlike the second phase interpreters, both Flinker and Vaughan read *Behemoth* as one would read drama: paying special attention to the places where the dramatic tension between the characters is most apparent.

Flinker's study was the first attempt to explain why it is important not to confuse what we believe *Behemoth* should contain with what *Behemoth* actually contains.

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<sup>63</sup> See Kraynak (1990), p. 33.

Scholars tended to overlook the fact that *Behemoth* is composed of four dialogues between A and B and, as a result, “most discussions of *Behemoth* ignore the personality distinctions between the characters.”<sup>64</sup> Flinker uses the interplay of *Behemoth*’s two characters to put forth a new understanding of Hobbes’s intent behind his history, one that stresses “Hobbes’s pessimism about rhetorical communication or persuasive teaching.”<sup>65</sup> For Flinker, *Behemoth*’s dialogues portray A as a teacher who is teaching an eager B a “model for illustrating all human evil” in the form of the Civil War.<sup>66</sup> The fact that B never does understand the model shows the reader the problem in political pedagogy. Flinker does not view the historical narrative or the content of the opinions as containing the true message of *Behemoth*. Rather, *Behemoth* is a dialogue between two characters: the teacher and the student, and the problem associated with conveying political wisdom from one to the other. What makes Hobbes’s view tragic is that the student B never quite learns how to think on his own without the teacher’s constant supervision. Seen in this way, *Behemoth* is not about political pedagogy as much as it is about the failure of political pedagogy.

Geoffrey Vaughan duplicated Flinker’s method and came to the opposite conclusion. As the title of his *Behemoth Teaches Leviathan* suggests, Vaughan shows how “the lesson ‘B’ learns is distrust.”<sup>67</sup> This distrust leads B and people like B to reject

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<sup>64</sup> See Noam Flinker’s “View from the ‘Devil’s Mountain’: Dramatic Tension in Hobbes’s *Behemoth*,” *Hobbes Studies* II (1989), p. 10.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>67</sup> Vaughan, (2002), p. 133.

dogma at face value, and consent to the solid principles of sovereignty made in *Leviathan*.<sup>68</sup> Like Flinker, Vaughan reads *Behemoth* as a story about political education. Unlike Flinker, Vaughan concludes that *Behemoth* is a successful lesson in loyalty and justice with the teacher (A) successfully teaching the student (B). In Vaughan's analysis, Hobbes intended *Behemoth* to be a demonstration of how political education should function. It uses history to teach scientific and political principles, which makes *Behemoth* an addition that Hobbes felt was necessary to complete his political project.

*Behemoth*'s role in Hobbes studies has changed, but what has not changed is how Hobbes scholars view *Behemoth*'s relationship to the rest of the Hobbes canon. In all cases, *Behemoth* is viewed as a work that supports Hobbes's political science from his earlier treatises. What has not yet been considered is that *Behemoth* may be an expression of Hobbes's doubts about his previous science or contains evidence that Hobbes may have seen fit to question his previous conclusions.

This argument is even more compelling when we consider the relationship between *Behemoth* and one of Hobbes's other post-Restoration works, *A Dialogue between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws of England*. As he did in *Behemoth*, Hobbes wrote *A Dialogue* as an exchange between two characters after the publication of *Leviathan*.<sup>69</sup> Additionally, some evidence suggests that Hobbes submitted

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<sup>68</sup> See p. 29, note 62 above.

<sup>69</sup> According to Joseph Cropsey, *A Dialogue* was completed "no earlier than 1662 and no later than 1675." See Joseph Cropsey's introduction to *A Dialogue between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws of England* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press: 1971), p. 3. This would place *A Dialogue* between *Leviathan* and *Behemoth* in terms of chronology. For the sake of space and clarity, this edition of *A Dialogue between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws of England* will henceforth be referred to as *A Dialogue*.

*A Dialogue* to his publisher as an unfinished appendix to *Behemoth* known as *De Legibus*.<sup>70</sup> Though scholarship on *A Dialogue* is sparse, both Joseph Cropsey and Susan Okin noticed that *A Dialogue* deviates from Hobbes's earlier thinking on the subject of mixed government.<sup>71</sup> Compared to Hobbes's earlier treatises, *A Dialogue* seems to portray Parliament in a much more favorable light, indicating that Hobbes may have reconsidered his earlier conclusions concerning the advisability of mixed governance. This raises the question of whether Hobbes may have reconsidered other aspects of his previous philosophy in the treatises, or perhaps reconsidered his philosophical project altogether.

This study will show that *Behemoth* and other writings approach political questions in a way that is different from that of Hobbes's pre-Restoration writings. As the discussion that follows shows, it is by no means clear that the writings from Hobbes's later career are simple restatements of his earlier philosophy. The style Hobbes used was different, the issues Hobbes faced were different, and the later works emphasized themes

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<sup>70</sup> This has caused some speculation that *De Legibus* might be *A Dialogue*, and furthermore, that *A Dialogue* is an incomplete work. See note 5 in Noel Malcolm's *Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, vol. II, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 773. The association between *A Dialogue* and *De Legibus* is grounded upon statements made by Hobbes to John Aubrey in a letter dated August 18, 1679. After recognizing that his "booke of the Civill Warr" was published overseas without Charles II's consent, Hobbes admits that "The treatise *De Legibus* . . . is imperfect" (p. 772).

<sup>71</sup> In his introduction to *A Dialogue*, Joseph Cropsey notices that "Hobbes presents an account of the English Parliament that shows it to be precisely coeval with the English (or rather Saxon) monarchy, not as a mere concession or contrivance; that in the modern world, the king cannot have troops except through Parliament; and that it is of the nature of the English Parliament to include a house composed of members elected by the people—not chosen by the crown—for their discretion" (*A Dialogue*, p. 9). Echoing Cropsey's observation, Susan Okin noticed "that on several occasions in *A Dialogue*, after lengthy discussion of a subject, the philosopher acquiesces in a number of important points made by the lawyer that do not fit in at all easily with Hobbes's political theory as set out in his *Elements of Law*, *De Cive*, and *Leviathan*. At the very least, it seems, Hobbes was seriously reconsidering some important aspects of the English system of government." See Susan Okin's "The Sovereign and His Counsellors," *Political Theory* Vol. 10, no. 1 (February 1982), pp. 49-50.

that are different from the themes of the earlier works. But if these later writings have a purpose that is different from Hobbes's earlier works, what purpose might they serve?

#### **Section 4: Scope and Relevance**

This study addresses several questions about Hobbes's post-Restoration career. Was there sufficient cause for him to be skeptical about his previous conception of political science? What aspects of politics and justice does Hobbes emphasize in his later career in contrast to his early career? Is Hobbes still convinced that good politics depends on the application of universal laws of politics derived from science? Or does Hobbes become convinced that good politics depends on the political skill of the sovereign, making politics more art than science? Perhaps the first and most important question a study of this type should ask is what can Hobbes's dialogues teach us about political science today?

Perhaps the most fundamental question we should ask when we consider Hobbes is his applicability to our present political condition. Many scholars consider Hobbes to be the first example of a modern social scientist, providing the blueprint for how we conduct social science to this day.<sup>72</sup> Accordingly, Hobbes is also susceptible to many of the same criticisms. Three criticisms are generally made against social science that were also applied to Hobbes's science.

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<sup>72</sup> Leo Strauss (1959) suggests in *What Is Political Philosophy?* that "if we understand ourselves correctly, we see that our perspective is identical with Hobbes's perspective" (p. 172). Like modern empirical social science, Hobbes argued that the object of social science was to replace the common sense reckoning of the classical authors with useful systems based upon reified models of human behavior. Hobbes accomplishes this through his pursuit of precise definitions, similar to those of a geometrician. See also John Danford's article: "The Problem of Language in Hobbes's Political Science," *Journal of Politics* Vol. 42 (February 1980), pp. 102-134.

The first is that contemporary social science overemphasizes a particularly narrow version of self-interest as the cause of all human political behavior. Jane Mansbridge argues that this tendency is directly attributable to Hobbes's influence, claiming that Hobbes was the first thinker to conceive of politics as "a state of universal, irreconcilable conflict."<sup>73</sup> Whether or not this narrow view of self-interest is indeed what Hobbes held, the result of this conception of self-interest is that politics tends to be viewed by social science as an adversarial affair between groups with divergent interests, even in times of relative peace.<sup>74</sup> This adversarial conception of self-interest tends to dominate our understanding of politics, particularly in those fields that lend themselves to empirical investigation.<sup>75</sup> However, Mansbridge wonders if perhaps the adversarial conception of self-interest is too narrow to be an effective explanation for all political motivation. Consensus, deliberation, and altruistic behavior are problematic for the adversarial model to incorporate, and a more useful conception of political motivation should

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<sup>73</sup> See Jane Mansbridge's "Rise and Fall of Self-Interest in the Explanation of Political Life," Chap. 1 in *Beyond Self Interest* (ed. Jane Mansbridge, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 4.

<sup>74</sup> Consider James Madison's concept of faction from Federalist 10: "By faction I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community." Taken from Bailyn (1993), p. 405.

<sup>75</sup> Perhaps the clearest examples of how the adversarial model has influenced political science can be found in the field of voting behavior. Consider Joseph Schlesinger's view of the adversarial relationship between officeholders and their constituents. "The acknowledgement is inherent in the common observation that most, if not all, officeholders are 'opportunists' whose preoccupation with office and its powers overrides all other concerns, including public policy." Taken from Joseph Schlesinger's *Political Parties and the Winning of Office* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1991), p. 138.

“accommodate issues on which citizens have, or can come to have, a common interest, as well as issues on which citizens’ interests conflict.”<sup>76</sup>

This criticism of adversarial self-interest is one that Hobbes would have known, as it is a criticism that Clarendon made against Hobbes 314 years before Mansbridge’s article. In his “Survey of Mr. Hobbes,” Clarendon questions whether human beings are “so full of jealousie and malignity” that they cannot govern themselves unless “they all become yoaked by a Covenant and Contract that Mr. Hobbes hath provided for them.”<sup>77</sup> Like Mansbridge, Clarendon observes that human beings often act in ways that undermine the narrow, self-interested behavior described in *Leviathan*. Rather than explain man’s political nature, Hobbes “deprives man of the greatest happiness and glory that can be attributed to him, who devests him of that gentleness and benevolence towards other men.”<sup>78</sup> Clarendon’s assessment of human beings incorporates a broader view of human potential than does Hobbes’s science. In addition, Clarendon’s positive assessment of glory seeking alludes to the second criticism of the type of social science Hobbes created.

While the first criticism points out the limitations of social science to describe how human beings *do* behave, the second criticism points out the inadequacy of social science in describing how human beings *should* behave. Specifically, modern social science fails to capture what Albert Hirschman called “the heroic ideal,” or the capacity

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<sup>76</sup> Mansbridge (1990), p. 22.

<sup>77</sup> See Clarendon’s “A Survey of Mr. Hobbes: *His Leviathan*” taken from G.A.J. Rogers’s *Leviathan: Contemporary Responses to the Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (Bristol, UK: Thoemmes Press, 1995), p. 196.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.



of individuals to pursue “honor and glory” as “the touchstone of a man’s virtue and greatness.”<sup>79</sup>

Hannah Arendt viewed Hobbes’s conception of human nature as essentially a behavioralist one, quite similar to the behavioralist conceptions of human nature found in our contemporary social science. According to Arendt, Hobbes views a human beings as “without reason, without the capacity for truth, and without free will—that is, without the capacity for responsibility.”<sup>80</sup> This is also, in Arendt’s view, the way in which our social science views human nature, reducing “man as a whole, in all his activities, to the level of a conditioned and behaving animal.”<sup>81</sup> In this view, there is no room for human beings to express virtues that fall outside the norm of what is expected of them, and at the same time, act in accordance with what is good or lawful. While Hobbes’s science admits that human beings at times act in ways that are contrary to self-interest while pursuing high ideals, these actions are generally seen as madness.

Actions that are pursued for the sake of high or heroic ideals are manifestations of what Hobbes’s science called “vain-glory.”<sup>82</sup> Consequently, they are seen as having little redeeming political or social value. As Gabriella Slomp, a recent Hobbes scholar, indicates, “the desire for glory and superiority is a fundamental cause of discord in the

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<sup>79</sup> See Hirschman’s *The Passions and the Interests* (Twentieth Anniversary Edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 10.

<sup>80</sup> See Hannah Arendt’s *Origins of Totalitarianism*, second edition (Cleveland, OH: Meridian Books, 1958), p. 139.

<sup>81</sup> See Arendt’s *Human Condition*, second edition (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 45.

<sup>82</sup> “The vain-glory which consisteth in the feigning or supposing of abilities in our selves, which we know are not, is most incident to young men, and nourished by the Histories, or Fictions of Gallant Persons; and is corrected often times by Age, and Employment” (*Leviathan*, I.6.125).

state of nature and the primary source of dissolution of political states.”<sup>83</sup> Since this desire for glory was destructive to the commonwealth, Hobbes’s science characterized the pursuit of glory as a kind of political disease. However, by denigrating the pursuit of glory, Hobbes also denigrates the pursuit of any virtue that supersedes or conflicts with the fear of violent death, the passion that should, in Hobbes’s estimation, trump all others.<sup>84</sup>

The third criticism against Hobbes’s social science is that he creates what Robert Kraynak would call “scientific absolutism,” or an aura of infallibility surrounding the conclusions of social science.<sup>85</sup> This issue will be considered in detail in the final chapter, but suffice it to say for now that like many political scientists, Hobbes was optimistic about the ability of political theory to solve the perennial problems of politics. He did not view his science as merely a framework to study human questions for the sake of curiosity, as he believed that “knowledge is power,” and theory should be used for “the performing of some action, or thing to be done.”<sup>86</sup> For Hobbes, science was not only a window to perceive the underlying truth behind politics, it was a tool of statecraft useful for correcting the political system where necessary. Ignorance of science can lead to

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<sup>83</sup> See Slomp’s *Hobbes and the Political Philosophy of Glory* (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), p. 73.

<sup>84</sup> In *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* (1952), Leo Strauss observes that “the criticism of aristocratic virtue thus, in the last analysis, means the replacement of honor by the fear of violent death. And even though one may characterize Hobbes’s morals as utilitarian morals, it is only with the important limitation that these morals are based on the fear of violent death, on a passion which is not in itself prudent, but which *makes* man prudent” (p. 116).

<sup>85</sup> See Kraynak (1982), pp. 844-847; and Kraynak (1990), pp. 187-216.

<sup>86</sup> See Hobbes’s *De Corpore*, translated as *Elements of Philosophy in English Works I* (London: John Bonn, 1839), p. 7. Henceforth, this edition will be referred to as *De Corpore*.

disorder and disharmony as “the utility of moral and civil philosophy is to be estimated, not so much by the commodities we have by knowing these sciences, as by the calamities we receive from not knowing them.”<sup>87</sup> In Hobbes’s view, the difference between political harmony and political calamity rests upon, as Hans Morgenthau would say, “the opportunity to found the dominion of reason over human affairs.”<sup>88</sup> In Hobbes’s own words, when citizens “have learned those duties which unite and keep men in peace” they will “convert this truth of speculation, into the utility of practice.”<sup>89</sup>

The Hobbes who wrote the treatises was confident that politics was a science and not an art. In other words, the best solution to the problems of the commonwealth was not to be found in the political skill of the statesman, but rather in applying the results of scientific investigation to the commonwealth. He believed “the skill in making, and maintaining Common-wealths, consisteth in certain rules, as doth Arithmetique and Geometry; not (as Tennis-play) on Practise onely.”<sup>90</sup> In other words, science had the capability of discovering a robust formula to solve the problems of the commonwealth that was generally applicable to most cases in most circumstances. No longer would commonwealths have to hope that their leaders had enough political skill, virtue and prudence to ensure peace and tranquility. Instead, Hobbes made it clear that peace and

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>88</sup> See Hans Morgenthau’s *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), p. 38.

<sup>89</sup> From *De Corpore*, p. 8; and *Leviathan* II.31.408, respectively.

<sup>90</sup> *Leviathan*, II.21.261.

tranquility could be guaranteed better by the application of scientifically derived solutions more than by the statesman's art.

Still, to say that the statesman's art is inconsequential to peace and stability is to deny the facts of the English Civil War. Charles I might have had the full constitutional authority vested in the office he occupied; and he might have been a capable and just ruler by the standards of Hobbes's science. Yet, like Seth Low's regime fully 250 years later, Charles I's regime would fall victim to political opportunists who were more skillful in the art of politics than he. One of Hobbes's greatest critics, Bishop John Bramhall, stated the importance of the statesman's art to the commonwealth in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Using Hobbes's reference to tennis-play in his praise of science, Bramhall responds by stating that:

State-policy, which is wholly involved in matter, and circumstances of time, and place, and persons, is not at all like *Arithmetik and Geometry*, which are altogether abstracted from matter, but much more like *Tennis-play*. There is no place for liberty in *Arithmetik and Geometry*, but in policy there is, and so there is in *Tennis-play*. A game at Tennis hath its vicissitudes, and so have States. A Tennis plaier must change his play at every stroke, according to the occasion and accidents: so must a Statesman move his rudder differently, according to the various faces of heaven. He who manageth a Common-wealth by general rules, will quickly ruine both himself, and those who are committed to his government. One mans meat is another mans poison; and those which are healthful Rules for one Society at one time, may be pernicious to another Society, or to the same society at another time. Some nations are like Horses, more patient of their riders than others; And the same Nations more patient at one time than at another. In summe, general rules are easie, and signifie not much in policy. The quintessence of policy doth consist in the dexterous and skilful application of those rules to the subject matter.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> See Bramhall's "Catching of *Leviathan*, or the Great Whale" taken from Rogers (1995), p. 141.

To be fair, Hobbes's science depends on strong, autonomous leadership in order to maintain the peace. *Leviathan* outlines the mandate of the sovereign as *salus populi* and describes the powers the sovereign needs to fulfill this mandate, but it is silent on the question of how to distinguish a more effective sovereign from a less effective one.<sup>92</sup> In other words, Hobbes's science is silent on questions of effective leadership, primarily because effective leadership implies that politics is an art that resembles a game of tennis more than it resembles a solution to a mathematical problem. Bramhall observes that politics is a dynamic enterprise that requires dynamic leadership to master its vicissitudes. It is not, as *Leviathan* suggests, a static enterprise that responds to a static formula.

These three criticisms of social science can be traced back to criticisms made against Hobbes's science in Hobbes's own time. The question of whether Hobbes could appreciate these criticisms and modify his philosophy to ameliorate them has yet to be considered, but Hobbes's turn to dialectic in his post-Restoration works makes sense when we consider that Hobbes may have been aware of certain shortcomings in his pre-Restoration works. While Hobbes believed that true civil philosophy was no older than his *De Cive*, the fact that he would write treatises of civil philosophy after *De Cive* show that Hobbes continued to refine his thinking. Recognizing that "the first grounds of all

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<sup>92</sup> See Sheldon Wolin's *Hobbes and the Epic Tradition of Political Theory* (Los Angeles, CA: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1970). Wolin noticed that "despite the fact that sovereignty was what *Leviathan* was all about, Hobbes consistently ignored all the obvious questions about the character of the person who was to wield this awesome power. No extended discussion is to be found concerning the education or moral qualities necessary to the exercise of sovereignty" (p. 28).

science are not only not beautiful, but poor, arid, and, in appearance, deformed,”<sup>93</sup>

Hobbes understood that science, especially a young science such as civil philosophy, has a problem demonstrating its first assumptions. The type of theoretical approach Hobbes utilizes in his science is rather precise, but relies upon the “strength of conviction regarding the truth of the first principles from which the procedure begins.”<sup>94</sup> Hobbes handles this problem within his own science by stressing the importance of having unambiguous definitions of the central concepts we use in political discourse.<sup>95</sup> Once the definitions are settled, the science is a simple matter of propositional logic, which is why Hobbes calls science “the knowledge of consequences.”<sup>96</sup> While science is able to demonstrate the relationship between cause and consequence with relative ease, it can only do so because the antecedent is already assumed to be true.<sup>97</sup> Yet what makes Hobbes’s definitions the true definitions of the terms and on what basis is this truth affirmed? As we have seen from his admission in *De Corpore*, the first principles of any science are often rough, and rely upon the reader to accept them in that rough state. The study will attempt to show that Hobbes used dialectic to provide a more comprehensive

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<sup>93</sup> *De Corpore*, p. 2.

<sup>94</sup> See John Danford’s *Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1978). The original criticism is derived from statements in Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics* about the differences between the various types of knowledge. “Scientific knowledge (*epistēmē*) in the strict sense is thus concluded to be capable of demonstration, to be necessary and certain, but nevertheless incomplete or inadequate, because limited by its dependence on first principles which it is not able to supply” (p. 131).

<sup>95</sup> *Leviathan*, I,7,131.

<sup>96</sup> *Leviathan*, I,5,115.

<sup>97</sup> See Victoria Silver’s “The Fiction of Self-Evidence in Hobbes’s *Leviathan*,” from *ELH*, vol. 55, No. 2 (Summer 1988), where she claims that “self-evidence in all discourse—science, counsel, scripture, or law—requires a formal education of meaning for words whose significance is pivotal or controversial” (p. 361).

understanding of politics than his science can allow. The use of dialectic in this fashion was not unknown to Hobbes's predecessors, since Aristotle saw dialectic as "being the source for the first principles of all sciences."<sup>98</sup> This may help explain why Hobbes saw fit to write additional works on political matters in the dialogue form. While dialectic lacks precision, it makes up for this deficiency by offering a much more comprehensive account of generally held opinions about the nature of politics and history.<sup>99</sup> Whether this is what Hobbes intended to do with his post-Restoration writings is something that must be explored further, but the answer may be rather instructive as to whether Hobbes became more skeptical of his conception of political science as delineated in the treatises.

A study of Hobbes's dialogues will not only constitute a new contribution to our understanding of him, but it will also speak to our discipline generally. As one of the first modern political scientists, Hobbes was also the first to propose that social science under a scientific method might provide a cure for the perennial problems of politics. The dialogues seem to present a different teaching from that found in Hobbes's more familiar works. All of Hobbes's previous works were written in response to a time when the very foundations of civil order in England were crumbling, but both *Behemoth* and *A Dialogue* were written after the English Civil War resolved itself. Chapter III explores, through a close study of Hobbes's *Behemoth*, the possibility that Hobbes might have developed a more realistic sense of science's capability and its limitations. Chapter IV

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<sup>98</sup> See Danford (1978), p. 148.

<sup>99</sup> In Part I of *De Corpore*, Hobbes admits that true philosophy "excludes history . . . natural as political," but admits that natural and political history is "most useful (nay necessary) to philosophy" (*De Corpore*, pp. 10-11).

explores the question of how Hobbes explained the Restoration and how his conception of politics changed because of it. Chapter V explores Hobbes's insight into successful and unsuccessful techniques of sovereign leadership through his use of historical sovereigns throughout the dialogues. Chapter VI continues to explore Hobbes's concept of leadership before and after his scientific treatises by comparing Hobbes's solutions with those of Machiavelli. Finally, chapter VII explores the idealism that is inherent in Hobbes's science by contrasting it with his more realistic approach to political problems found in his dialogues. Taken together, the various components of this study attempt to show how Hobbes's dialogues give us a new perspective on Hobbes's place in the history of political thought with a different message to consider than the message found when reading Hobbes's treatises alone. By engaging in a study of this type, we not only gain insight into one of the most important thinkers in the history of ideas, but we gain insight into the promise and limitations of the way we think about politics today.

To begin this exploration, it is necessary in the next chapter to explain how the Hobbes of the dialogues communicates his message. Reading a philosophical dialogue requires a different set of assumptions than reading a philosophical treatise. Not only is it necessary to understand how a philosophical dialogue needs to be read differently than a treatise, but it is also necessary to understand Hobbes's dialectical style. While it is important to consider the form Hobbes had chosen, it is also important to understand why Hobbes may have chosen the form that he did. The very fact that Hobbes chose to write in dialectic is itself an important fact to consider, and ascertaining why he preferred dialectic in his later career helps us to understand the message he wanted to communicate



to us. Only by understanding both how and why Hobbes wrote dialogues can we best ascertain what Hobbes's mature teaching on politics may be.

## CHAPTER II

### INTERPRETING HOBBS'S DIALOGUES

#### **Section 1: Hobbes's Turn to Dialectic**

When examining the history of political thought as a whole, one cannot help but notice the change in how political thinkers write about their subjects. The way we choose to write about politics is far different from the way Plato chose to do so. Our standards do not allow for much discretion in matters of style. We expect our peers to present their evidence and conclusions plainly and clearly. It is difficult for us to see how dialectic, the form employed by Plato, can help us meet the burden of academic rigor expected in today's academy. Dialectic appears to our contemporary sensibilities as a dishonest form of academic writing: a form where the author refuses to take ownership of the words he writes. It also seems needlessly confusing to read as the arguments are spread out amongst several characters: fictional entities of convenience that meander into digressions, incomplete thoughts, absurdities, and errors.

Dialectic seems to be a strange, if not counterintuitive, format for a philosopher such as Hobbes. He believed the problem with his philosophical predecessors was that they were too obscure to be useful.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In *De Cive's* "Author's Preface to the Reader," Hobbes described how the ancients "chose to have the Science of Justice wrapt up in fables, then openly exposed to disputations" (p. 31). Taken from the Howard Warrender edition of *De Cive* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1983), and hereafter referred to as *De Cive*, chapter.section.page.

Nevertheless, Hobbes chose to write four dialogues after his treatise *Leviathan*, and all of them were written after the English Civil War was concluded. This shift in the way Hobbes chose to communicate is the natural starting point for understanding the differences between the Hobbes who wrote *Leviathan* and the post-*Leviathan* Hobbes. Understanding the possible causes of Hobbes's decision to write dialogues makes the task of understanding what he is trying to communicate to us much clearer.

This is not to say that Hobbes's pre-Restoration treatises and post-Restoration dialogues are incompatible. Hobbes maintained unto his death the belief that there is no greater illness the commonwealth can suffer than civil war. Furthermore, the illness of civil war can only be cured by a strong, capable, independent and absolute sovereign that is fully committed to the principle of *salus populi*, or the safety and well-being of the people under the sovereign's rule.<sup>2</sup> These similarities make the assertion that the Hobbes of *Behemoth* supports a different conception of politics from that of the Hobbes of *Leviathan* difficult to maintain. However, it is not difficult to see how Hobbes changed in subtle ways if we read the dialogues under one important assumption: that Thomas Hobbes was a careful writer.

Hobbes was not a typical author. He was one of the most precise and meticulous writers in the history of political thought. He believed he had to be in order to avoid the shortcomings of his philosophical predecessors. Specifically, Hobbes believed that previous political philosophers lacked precision, and this lack of precision created the

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<sup>2</sup> In *Behemoth*, A describes the qualities that are expected of sovereigns when he claims that "the virtues of sovereigns are such as tend to the maintenance of peace at home, and to the resistance of foreign enemies" (pp. 44-45).

doctrinal crisis that caused general confusion on matters of justice.<sup>3</sup> In response, Hobbes deliberately chose his language with the utmost care. This care is most evident in *Leviathan*, where Hobbes informs his reader in his introduction that he will “set down my own reading orderly, and perspicuously,”<sup>4</sup> giving the reader a clear demonstration of the true science of politics. Hobbes delivered on his promise by creating a substantial political treatise that is uncannily precise and etymologically consistent from beginning to end.<sup>5</sup> From the very first sentence in *Leviathan*’s first chapter, Hobbes informs the reader that he will approach the subject systematically, starting with man’s thoughts, “first singly, and afterwards in trayne, or dependence upon one another.”<sup>6</sup> This is important for Hobbes to convey early in his treatise, because it is important for his purposes to show how human beings define terms before he may attempt to define terms of his own. Terminology, or the lack of a consistent terminology, is what causes

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<sup>3</sup> This is an accusation Hobbes repeats throughout his treatises, starting from the epistle dedicatory of *The Elements of Law* noting “that they that have written of justice and policy in general, do all invade each other, and themselves, with contradiction.” See Hobbes’s *Elements of Law*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, ed. Ferdinand Tönnies (Totowa, NJ: Frank Cass, 1969), p. xv; hereafter referred to as *Elements of Law*, part.chapter.page. Hobbes maintains this position when he criticizes the great works of moral philosophy in *De Corpore*, stating “that which is chiefly wanting in them, is a true and certain rule of our actions, by which we might know whether that we undertake be just or unjust” (*De Corpore*, p. 9). He repeats this assertion in *De Cive*’s “Author’s Preface to the Reader” accusing “men of all nations” of engaging in political philosophy “as a matter of ease . . . to be attained without any great care or study” (p. 30).

<sup>4</sup> *Leviathan*, introduction, p. 83.

<sup>5</sup> In *A Literary Leviathan* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1991), Charles Cantalupo explains Hobbes’s care in constructing *Leviathan*, especially with regard to Hobbes’s use and consistency of definitions. “*Leviathan* is a consistently startling and magnificent display of one definition after another, arranged not according to the alphabet but according to what Hobbes sees as the most persuasive order for the ‘conveyance’ of his ‘precepts.’ The quality and sharp style of the definitions in *Leviathan* are unprecedented in English literature and second in their aptness only to Samuel Johnson’s dictionary. Hobbes is obviously committed to the belief that if he states the specific meaning or meanings of important secular and sacred words—that is, their historical, contemporary, metaphorical, ‘reall,’ and etymological significance—then the philosophical and political ideas derived from his definitions will be trusted” (pp. 61-62).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, I.1.85.

diffidence between human beings, and this diffidence causes confusion when considering moral duties.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, it is no surprise that Hobbes starts all of his treatises with some explanation of how human beings come to define their words, for the root cause of civil war can be reduced at some level to differences among human beings in understanding key concepts due to imprecise or ambiguous terms.<sup>8</sup>

When Hobbes defines his own terms, he starts with fundamental concepts, building definitions that are more complex by compounding concepts defined earlier in his works. After establishing a definition, Hobbes is consistent in the use of the words. While subtle differences arise when comparing Hobbes's definitions *among* his works, Hobbes is remarkably consistent when using definitions *within* each work. Part of what makes Hobbes so persuasive is the care he takes to explain concepts "in a beautifully lucid sequence of terms and relations" that "leaves no inference or circumstance of the argument to his reader's imagination."<sup>9</sup> Given *Leviathan's* rhetorical style, we cannot help but conclude that Hobbes was an uncannily thoughtful writer and one who thought deeply about how his words would be received. In terms of interpretation, we must assume that the correct interpretation of any given line in Hobbes's works is the most literal one, taking into account whatever qualifications Hobbes deemed necessary in the

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<sup>7</sup> "From the same it proceedeth, that men give different names, to one and the same thing, from the difference of their own passions: As they that approve a private opinion, call it Opinion; but they that mislike it, Hæresie: and yet hæresie signifies no more than private opinion; but has onely a greater tincture of choler" (ibid., I.11.165).

<sup>8</sup> "Metaphors, and senseless and ambiguous words, are like *ignes fatui*; and reasoning upon them is wandering amongst innumerable absurdities; and their end, contention, and sedition, or contempt" (ibid., I.5.116-117).

<sup>9</sup> Silver (1988), p. 354.

text preceding the line under consideration. Thus Hobbes's works provide their own context as each work contains all of the necessary information to understand Hobbes's intent.

It is important to notice, however, that while any particular work of Hobbes is internally consistent with itself, the works taken as a whole are not always consistent with each other. That is to say, the terms established by Hobbes in one work do not always carry over into his other works. As Robert Kraynak shows, subtle variations exist between Hobbes's terms in his earliest political treatise, *The Elements of Law*, and the terms in his later *Leviathan*.<sup>10</sup> Kraynak's analysis shows that it is a mistake to assume that Hobbes reiterated the same conclusions throughout his career. While the same general conclusions about human nature and politics seem to pervade the whole of Hobbes's canon, he continued to refine his thinking on political matters as his career progressed.

This study shows how Hobbes refined his political thinking after the Restoration of the monarchy, and we can observe several initial differences between Hobbes's pre-Restoration treatises and his post-Restoration dialogues. Neither *Behemoth* nor *A Dialogue* used constructions such as the state of nature to explain the causes of the civil war, and Hobbes made no attempt to structure the dialogues according to the resolute-compositive method. Instead, Hobbes limits his analysis to evidence from the historical record, and offers specific examples to underpin the arguments of *his characters* rather than *himself*. J.W.N. Watkins maintains that this reliance on historical examples makes

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<sup>10</sup> Consider Kraynak's analysis of the differences between Hobbes's definitions for science, understanding, and right reason in *The Elements of Law* as compared with *Leviathan* in Kraynak (1990), p. 162.

*Behemoth* a descriptive work as opposed to *Leviathan*, a work that is more prescriptive in its aims.<sup>11</sup> While this is generally the case, it would be a mistake to say that *Leviathan* is not descriptive at all, since it includes a description of the political condition as it truly is, at least according to Hobbes's standards.<sup>12</sup> For the same reason, it would be a mistake to say that *Behemoth* is strictly descriptive. For a history of the English Civil War, *Behemoth* is peculiar in its use of historical examples that predate the reign of Charles I in much the same way as *A Dialogue* uses historical examples that predate the common law.<sup>13</sup> Part of the task of understanding Hobbes's writings is to understand how Hobbes used history. This will be examined in detail in chapter V, but this is not the only matter we need to understand. Hobbes wrote his two most important post-Restoration political works as dialogues. Therefore, understanding how Hobbes used the dialogue form may shed some light on a matter that Hobbes scholars are debating with increasing seriousness: the difference of intent between Hobbes's *Leviathan* and *Behemoth*.

In contrast to *Leviathan*, *Behemoth* was often considered a work of secondary importance. Scholars such as M.M. Goldsmith, Leo Strauss, and C.B. Macpherson viewed *Behemoth* as a minor work and more of a supplement to Hobbes's treatises rather

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<sup>11</sup> Watkins (1965), p. 15.

<sup>12</sup> Blair Campbell maintains that Hobbes's philosophy engages in both prescription and description. He states that "Hobbes was unique among political thinkers in attempting to deny political force to morality; he was quite conventional, however, in his tactic of manipulating the moral sphere by means of factual description." See "Prescription and Description in Political Thought: The Case for Hobbes," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (June, 1971), p. 386. I would argue that this is evident far more clearly in *Behemoth* than it is in *Leviathan*. Unlike *Leviathan*, *Behemoth* attempts to describe political events for the sake of determining the truth about politics. I would further add that the goal of *Leviathan* was primarily prescriptive, and describing the political reality was consequent to the prescriptive intent of the work.

<sup>13</sup> Consider the Saxon origins of parliament in both *Behemoth* (pp. 76-78), and *A Dialogue* (pp. 165-168).

than a philosophical work in its own right. This view would change as scholars such as Richard Ashcraft and Robert Kraynak started to interpret the historical narrative of *Behemoth* as having a purpose that is somewhat different from the purpose of Hobbes's earlier writings. The most recent trend in the scholarship from Noam Flinker and Geoffrey Vaughan shifts the focus from the historical narrative to the dramatic interplay between the characters. What all of these interpretations share is the belief that *Behemoth's* message explains or complements the message in the treatises. What has not been considered is the possibility that *Behemoth's* message constitutes something of a departure from the message of Hobbes's earlier writings, or that it may provide evidence of a subtle shift in Hobbes's conception of proper political inquiry.

Hobbes wrote both *Behemoth* and *A Dialogue* using only two characters. While literary dialectic was a known form of discourse employed by Plato and Cicero, there was considerable variation in how the form was employed.<sup>14</sup> Yet all dialogues, regardless of their origins, possess two fundamental qualities inherent to the form. The term *dialogue* comes from the root word *logos*, defined as both reason and speech. *Logos* is preceded by the prefix *di* or *dia*, and has a double meaning. The prefix *di* implies a bifurcation or division, meaning that a *dialogue* divides the reason or speech amongst the several characters. However, the prefix *dia* implies a movement or motion, which implies that a *dialogue* is a movement of reason or speech.<sup>15</sup> Both prefixes seem to explain what

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<sup>14</sup> See Chapter II of Werner Jaeger's *Aristotle*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), pp. 24-38.

<sup>15</sup> In *Philosophical Dialogue in the British Enlightenment*, Michael Prince describes the two ways dialogue can be interpreted. When thinking of dialogue in terms of the prefix *di*, "it might be more accurate to say that the *logos*, conceived as absolute unity, permits itself to be divided for the sake of human



makes a philosophical dialogue different from a philosophical treatise. A dialogue divides the reasoning and speech among two or more characters. The reasoning and speech also moves from one character to another as the dialogue moves from beginning to end.

This is different from a philosophical treatise where the actual philosophical process of reaching a conclusion is somewhat concealed. In a treatise, the conclusions are much more important than the process by which they are reached. By contrast, the author of a dialogue invites the reader to observe the philosophical process directly through observing how the characters reach their conclusions. In this way, philosophical dialectic can provide the reader with a glimpse into the philosophic process far more accurately than is available when reading a philosophic treatise. Yet if we are to take this view, we have to ask ourselves why Hobbes did not write political dialogues in his early career. If philosophical dialectic is truly the best way to depict the philosophic process with any accuracy, why did Hobbes turn to dialogue only in the latter stages of his career instead of all along?

We have no account of how Hobbes himself viewed philosophical dialectic, so it is difficult to understand why he rejected philosophical dialectic in his earlier career. What we do know is that the Hobbes who wrote the treatises believed philosophy should duplicate the same systematic approach as geometry. In other words, Hobbes believed

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comprehension, with the proviso that division remain all the time a propaedeutic to the recovery of a coherent whole.” Thinking of dialogue in terms of the prefix *dia* implies “passage, transition, movement, with no limitation upon the number of voices sharing in the *logos*.” Looking back into the origins of philosophical dialectic, “Plato seems to have understood dialogue in both senses.” See Michael Prince’s *Philosophical Dialogue in the British Enlightenment* (Cambridge: University Press, 1996), pp. 2-3.

that the philosopher should construct his argument as a mathematician constructs a geometric proof. This philosophical process is by necessity an activity performed in isolation with the objective already in sight.<sup>16</sup> It is not, as in philosophical dialectic, a collaborative activity with the objective of reaching a common understanding of what is unknown. Given this understanding of philosophy, it is no wonder that Hobbes took great care to construct his treatises with the clarity formerly found only in geometry.<sup>17</sup> This was the only way that Hobbes could guarantee the precision that his science required.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, the purpose of Plato's dialogues is to "prepare the way for philosophizing,"<sup>19</sup> aiming only secondarily at clarity and precision. Hobbes does not teach the readers of his treatises how to philosophize, or how to question. Rather, Hobbes uses his treatises to teach the importance of following a specific method: Hobbes's method.<sup>20</sup> This difference in purpose can explain why Hobbes chose to write his treatises in the manner he did. This does not explain, however, Hobbes's switch from writing treatises to writing in dialectic in his late career.

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<sup>16</sup> Consider that a geometrician tasked with providing a proof of the properties of a triangle needs the triangle in sight before the proof can begin.

<sup>17</sup> On the subject of previous philosophers, Hobbes observes that "there is not one of them that begins his ratiocination from the Definitions, or Explications of the names they are to use; which is a method that hath been used onely in Geometry; whose Conclusions have thereby been made indisputable" (*Leviathan*, I.5.113-114).

<sup>18</sup> "Hobbes, in any case, thinks that clear definitions actually uncover what justice *is*, because they remove the ambiguity which grows onto a word in vulgar usage and restore to it its proper or necessary meaning" (Danford, 1978, p. 42).

<sup>19</sup> See Allan Bloom's preface to Plato's *Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Basic Books, 1991), p. xxi.

<sup>20</sup> Sheldon Wolin emphasized the importance Hobbes placed on following his specific method as "the 'want of method' signifies weakness. Without it, men err and are deceived, and while experience, prudence, and natural wit may help by supplying bits of knowledge, they afford no guarantee of certainty, no assurance that they will serve well when they are most needed. All is changed by the advent of method, for it magnifies human power and certitude" (Wolin, 1970, p. 22).

Dialectical writing was not unknown or unpracticed in Hobbes's time.<sup>21</sup>

Dialogues on scientific matters, while less common, were written by a handful of scholars, most notably Galileo, who wrote *Dialogues Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*. Hobbes's choice to format his discussions with Bishop Bramhall in dialectic (*Liberty, Necessity, and Chance*) might imply that he tended to think of debates as dialogues, but dialogues were also an important part of Hobbes's overall rhetorical repertoire outside of the Bramhall debate. His preference for the format can be seen in the number of dialogues Hobbes wrote, including his works of natural science (*Seven Philosophical Problems* and *Decameron Physiologicum*), his work on law (*A Dialogue*), and his history of the English Civil War (*Behemoth*). This preference for the dialogue format seems conspicuous, if only because dialectic seems to run counter to his criticism of scholastic methods. Specifically, the artistic license available to the author using the dialectical form might distort the clarity of a philosophical or historical investigation.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> For an excellent survey of dialogues in the post-Restoration period, see Eugene Purpus's "The 'Plain, Easy, and Familiar Way': The Dialogue in English Literature, 1660-1725," *ELH*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (March 1950), 47-58. After examining over 2,000 extant manuscripts from the era, Purpus discovers that "Partial evidence of the reputation of the dialogue can be seen in the sheer bulk of dialogues published. Further evidence may be gained from noting the large number of dialogue writers. A list of merely the most prolific and best known includes such writers as Hobbes, Boyle, Fontenelle, Shaftesbury, Mandeville, Berkeley, Prior, Marvell, Henry More, Bunyan, Richard Baxter, Addison, Dryden, Pope, Charles Gildon, Charles Cotton, James Wright, John Dennis, Ned Ward, John Oldmixon, Thomas Brown, William King, Jeremy Collier, Isaac Walton, Roger L'Estrange, William Walsh, Ambrose Philips, and John Gay" (p. 54).

<sup>22</sup> Hobbes does not speak directly to the dialectical style, but he does discuss artistic embellishments when he talks about fancy as opposed to judgment in chapter 8 of *Leviathan*. Fancy in this context is "Good Wit" or the capacity "to observe differently the things that pass through" the imagination. One could interpret fancy as a kind of skill at adorning a work with "new and apt metaphors," and arguably, other stylistic embellishments. On the other hand, judgment is primarily concerned with "Distinguishing, and Discerning," and applies "Steadinesse, and Direction to some End." One can interpret judgment in this capacity as discretion when it comes to style, limiting stylistic embellishments for the sake of clarity. Both fancy and judgment are found in different proportions in various literary works. For example, "In a good Poem, whether it be *Epique*, or *Dramatique*; as also in Sonnets, Epigrams, and other Pieces, both Judgement and Fancy are required: But the Fancy must be more eminent; because they please for the

Why would Thomas Hobbes, arguably the most precise and rigorous thinker of his time, retreat to a style of philosophical discourse that sacrifices precision for artistic license?

There might have been pragmatic reasons for Hobbes to produce dialogues. The unique characteristics of the format allow a philosopher to accomplish objectives that cannot be accomplished in treatise form. Dialectic is a useful format for a philosopher who wants to protect himself from critics who have the power to limit or prevent the publication and distribution of the philosopher's work, as a critic can never know which of the characters speak for the writer. Because the author speaks through his characters in a dialogue, the author can make controversial statements he might be unlikely to make if he were writing in his own voice as himself as in a treatise. Any attempt by the authorities to censor or condemn the philosopher could be easily countered, as the philosopher can claim that no single character represents the philosopher. This gives the philosopher who writes dialectically an essential safeguard against retribution: plausible deniability. This was important for a philosopher who wrote at a time when books were examined closely by royal or religious authorities who were quick to condemn an author for attempting to publish seditious or heretical material.

There is some evidence suggesting that Hobbes wanted to insulate himself from criticism in his late career. In a letter to Cosimo de' Medici from 1669, Hobbes discusses his pamphlet explaining his geometric proof to square the circle. In it, Hobbes justifies why he submitted his earliest copies to his harshest critics: "I submitted them not to

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Extravagancy." On the other hand, "in a good History, the Judgement must be eminent; because the goodnesse consisteth, in the Method, in the Truth, and in the Choyse of the actions that are most profitable to be known. Fancy has no place, but onely in adorning the stile" (*Leviathan*, I.8.135-136).

friends, but to torturers—putting them, as it were, in a purifying fire. For I knew that, in writing books just as in real life, enemies are more useful than friends in enabling us to take precautions.”<sup>23</sup> Hobbes was no stranger to critics of his works, especially his political ones. By the time Hobbes wrote this letter in 1669, most of the leading intellectuals in Britain had condemned Hobbes’s *Leviathan* alongside his other political works. Those who criticized Hobbes’s works comprise a veritable who’s who in seventeenth century English political thought. Robert Filmer, George Lawson, John Bramhall, Edward Hyde (better known as the Earl of Clarendon), and James Harrington all wrote lengthy and learned critiques of Hobbes’s published thoughts on government. While Robert Filmer agreed in principle with Hobbes’s general conclusion, he believed Hobbes’s reasoning on natural law and the institutions of government “appear full of contradiction and impossibilities.”<sup>24</sup> George Lawson called Hobbes “one of the worst that ever wrote either of Civil or Ecclesiastical Politicks” due to Hobbes’s stance on the relationship between economic power and political power.<sup>25</sup> Bishop John Bramhall shows how Hobbes’s philosophy “destroyeth all relations between man and man, Prince and subject, Parent and child, Husband and wife, Master and servant, and generally all society.”<sup>26</sup> Clarendon’s criticism of Hobbes is made in equally strong terms “as he [Hobbes] hath made a worse Man by much, by making him too like himself; so he hath

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<sup>23</sup> Malcolm (1994), p. 711.

<sup>24</sup> See Filmer’s “Observations on Mr. Hobbes’s *Leviathan*” taken from G.A.J. Roger’s *Leviathan: Contemporary Responses to the Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1995), p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> See Lawson’s “Examination of the Political Part of Mr. Hobbs: His *Leviathan*” taken from *ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>26</sup> See Bramhall’s “Catching of *Leviathan*, or the Great Whale” taken from *ibid.*, p. 139.

made a much worse Common-wealth then ever was yet known in the World, by making it such as he would have.”<sup>27</sup> In *Oceana*, James Harrington upholds the notion of an “empire of laws and not men” and shows how “*Leviathan* goes about to destroy” the traditional understanding that laws are the foundation of a lasting commonwealth.<sup>28</sup> With all of these criticisms against *Leviathan* from Hobbes’s contemporaries, and Hobbes’s growing concern that he could face execution for atheism and profanity,<sup>29</sup> it is easy to see why he would want to take precautions against his intellectual adversaries. Unlike his mathematical proofs, Hobbes would not have to submit his political works to the scrutiny of torturers; it would seem that the torturers would scrutinize Hobbes’s political writings whether or not Hobbes desired their scrutiny. Nevertheless, if Hobbes thought that he needed to take precautions against his critics for something as harmless as squaring the circle, it is only natural to assume that Hobbes also believed that he needed to take precautions against his critics for something as contentious as political philosophy, as the salience of the issues at stake is significantly greater in political philosophy. Not surprisingly, the period when Hobbes wrote the de’Medici letter (1669) coincides with the period when Hobbes was writing dialogues. Therefore, the possibility that Hobbes used dialectic to protect himself from potential critics is a real one. What would Hobbes want to conceal from critics?

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<sup>27</sup> See Clarendon’s “Survey of Mr. Hobbes: *His Leviathan*” taken from *ibid.*, p. 206.

<sup>28</sup> See Harrington’s *Oceana*, edited by James Pocock (Cambridge: University Press, 1992), pp. 8-9. This edition will hereafter be referred to as *Oceana*.

<sup>29</sup> An excellent summary of the accusations against Hobbes can be found in Philip Milton’s article “Hobbes, Heresy, and Lord Arlington” (*History of Political Thought*, Vol. XIV, No. 4: 1993, 501-546). “It was the prospect of being burnt alive that fueled Hobbes’s obsession with heresy” (p. 521).

It is tempting to read *Behemoth* as an unqualified defense of Charles I's reign, but *Behemoth* includes a fair amount of criticism of Charles I. The most obvious criticism is the episode describing the introduction of the Book of Common Prayer into Scotland. *Behemoth's* A surmises that the Scots "never would have ventured into the field" had Charles I not introduced the Book into Scotland in 1637.<sup>30</sup> Goldsmith, MacGillivray, and Holmes have interpreted this passage as Hobbes's criticism of Charles I.<sup>31</sup> Specifically, Hobbes believed that Charles I was unaware of the deleterious consequences of his religious policy and could not manage the discontent it caused. This passage shows that Hobbes was using his history as more than a defense of Charles I's reign; he was also criticizing it. The question, therefore, is not whether Hobbes *was critical* of Charles I, but rather, *how critical* Hobbes was of Charles I. The depth of Hobbes's criticism of Charles I will be explored in detail in chapter V, but suffice it to say for now that *Behemoth* is not an unqualified defense of Charles I's reign. Given that Charles I's son was on the throne when Hobbes was writing *Behemoth*, and tensions were still high

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<sup>30</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 28.

<sup>31</sup> M.M. Goldsmith contends that Hobbes criticized Archbishop William Laud's advice to impose the Book of Common Prayer. Hobbes suggests "that Laud was not a good choice for the position [of Archbishop of Canterbury], and that some of the King's officials . . . were infected with the doctrines of the opposition." While "the King, then, should have appointed other counselors," Charles I nevertheless "should never have gotten into a situation of this sort" (Goldsmith, 1966, p. 240). Royce MacGillivray echoes Goldsmith's observation and adds an observation of his own. MacGillivray observed that Hobbes mentioned the conflict between *Jacobus Arminius* and Franciscus Gomarus on the subject of predestination in *An Answer to Bishop Bramhall*. While "in *Behemoth* he does not attribute so much importance to the Arminian controversy as he seems to do" in his *Answer to Bishop Bramhall*, Hobbes "has B. state that it is 'strange, that the state should engage in their parties, and not rather put them both to silence.' This observation," MacGillivray notes, "is about the closest Hobbes gets in *Behemoth* to an open criticism of the policies of Charles I" (MacGillivray, 1970, p. 191 in reference to *Behemoth*, p. 62). While not mentioning the Arminian controversy, Stephen Holmes reaches a similar conclusion regarding the prayer book controversy. Holmes states in the introduction of the third Tönnies edition that "regret about the prayer book episode is the closest Hobbes comes to admitting royal misgovernment, rather than insubordination among miseducated subjects, led to the breakdown of authority" (*Behemoth*, p. xli).

between the royalists and parliamentarians, there was ample reason for Hobbes to be concerned that whatever criticism he believed was necessary to include might be interpreted as treason. Therefore, it seems only natural that Hobbes would want to take precautions when criticizing Charles I, or the royalist cause in general, and the dialogue format allows Hobbes to do this in a way he might not be able to do when speaking as himself as he would in a philosophic treatise.

Besides the capacity to insulate oneself from criticism, philosophical dialectic can be useful to a philosopher as a way to test or refine ideas that would be inappropriate to discuss through prose. In a treatise, the author places himself and his reputation as a philosopher on display to the reader. This naturally causes the writer to convey only the most obvious or demonstrable ideas, which excludes many other ideas that the author might want to explore. In a dialogue, the author voices opinions or arguments through the characters, and by doing so, is allowed to test or explore radical or even contradictory propositions without harming his philosophical reputation. It is precisely for this reason that Anthony Ashley Cooper (the Earl of Shaftesbury) stated that the ancients “give us the representation of real discourse and converse by treating their subjects in the way of dialogue and free debate.”<sup>32</sup> Shaftesbury knew that the dialectic the ancients practiced was intellectually honest and stimulating in a way that the prose of his time could not duplicate. When an author speaks to the reader through a treatise, the author’s interest is to impress the reader. Conversely, the reader of a treatise sits in judgment of the author,

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<sup>32</sup> See Shaftesbury’s *Characteristics*, ed. Lawrence Klein (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), p. 35. Compare the ancient style with his description of “an author who writes in his own person” who “purchases his reader’s favour by all imaginable compliances and condescensions” (p. 89) in section 3 of his essay entitled “Soliloquy” (pp. 85-94).



determining whether the author produces a convincing case. In a dialogue, however, the author has no interest in placating the reader, because the words the characters utter are not necessarily a reflection of the author's own opinion. Instead, the author can concentrate on producing interesting lines of thought without having to consider how a reader sitting in judgment will receive the words. The reader of a dialogue is similarly not interested in evaluating the author. Instead of judging the author, the reader of a dialogue focuses on the competing arguments the characters espouse. The writer of dialogues is able to approach subjects freely and test ideas, and consequently, dialectic can be an ideal form for a philosopher who wants to engage in self-criticism or a re-evaluation of the philosopher's previously established ideas.

There is evidence that Hobbes was not pleased with some of his pre-Restoration writings. For example, Hobbes's *Philosophical Problems* (1662) contains an epistle dedicatory that is described by Molesworth as "an apology for himself and his writings."<sup>33</sup> In it, Hobbes conveys his regret for the material in *Leviathan* that was "contrary to the general opinions of the divines."<sup>34</sup> He explains that his writing should be read as "neither atheism nor heresy," since it only endeavored to place "the authority of the Church wholly upon the regal power."<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, Hobbes admits that by arguing against the Episcopal authorities, he also inadvertently cast aspersions upon some of Charles II's most loyal supporters. This is why Hobbes asks Charles II not to "think

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<sup>33</sup> See *Seven Philosophical Problems and Two Propositions of Geometry* in Molesworth's *English Works* Vol. VII, (London: John Bohn, 1845), p. 3. This edition will hereafter be referred to as *Philosophical Problems*.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

the worse” of him “if snatching up all the weapons to fight against your enemies” he “lighted upon one that had a double edge.”<sup>36</sup> It seems odd that Hobbes would use this epistle dedicatory from his work on physics to discuss the political controversy surrounding his political work. Nevertheless, the epistle dedicatory of *Philosophical Problems* shows us that Hobbes was still deeply concerned with his political treatises and how they were received.

*Philosophical Problems* was not expressly a political work, as the dialogue begins with a question by A concerning “the cause ... that stones and other bodies thrown upward ... fall down again,”<sup>37</sup> indicating that this is primarily a work of physics with some geometric propositions included in the last chapter. Nevertheless, this work can be interpreted as a political work in the sense that it is an attack against “the old philosophers” as they are unable to persuade A that the causes of natural forces such as gravity are as they discern.<sup>38</sup> Given Hobbes’s statement in the Epistle Dedicatory, he admits that *Leviathan* was unable to persuade the religious authorities on religious grounds. However, if *Leviathan* is unpersuasive in battling the scholastics on religious grounds, *Leviathan* may be able to battle the scholastics on the grounds where its science is most at home: the explanation of natural phenomena. Therefore, *Philosophical Problems* is political in the sense that it attempts to refocus attention on *Leviathan* as a work of natural science rather than as an attack against religion. This is the most obvious

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

explanation for the work, as A mentions *Leviathan* by name in the context of understanding how “all sense is fancy.”<sup>39</sup>

Yet a quick analysis of the actual placement of *Leviathan* in the text of *Philosophical Problems* is intriguing. While *Philosophical Problems* is composed of eight chapters, the full title of the work is *Seven Philosophical Problems and Two Propositions of Geometry*. In the Epistle Dedicatory, Hobbes explains that his work is arranged “under seven heads. 1. Problems of gravity. 2. Problems of tides. 3. Problems of vacuum. 4. Problems of heat. 5. Problems of hard and soft. 6. Problems of wind and weather. 7. Problems of motion perpendicular and oblique, &c.”<sup>40</sup> The last chapter is not a part of the seven philosophical problems Hobbes discusses, but “two propositions of geometry” added on to the end as a kind of appendix to the main text.<sup>41</sup> The fourth philosophical problem is covered in chapter 4: “Problems of Heat and Light.” It is a chapter composed of forty-one lines between A and B. The twenty-first line of the chapter is a line by character A composed of three sentences. The second sentence reads “and I perceive by your doctrine you have been tampering with *Leviathan*.”<sup>42</sup> This is the

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. Nowhere in this initial description does Hobbes claim that these two geometrical propositions constitute a chapter in themselves, nor does he say that they are part of the philosophical problems under investigation. The main focus of the text seems to be the “seven heads” of philosophical problems “to which I [Hobbes] have added two propositions of geometry” (p. 3). Therefore, it seems that chapter 8 is not to be regarded as part of the main text, and was incorporated into a chapter of its own as an afterthought. An examination of the end of chapter 7 makes this suspicion likely, as the characters seem to conclude why “the old philosophers” in the initial question are not believable. Specifically, science rests “upon better ground than can be had for a discourse on ghosts” (p. 58).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

first and only time either of the characters mentions *Leviathan*, and the only time *Leviathan* appears in any of Hobbes's dialogues.

Besides the curious fact that this mention occurs in the middle sentence in the middle line in the middle problem of the seven philosophical problems, the sentence in context seems out of place. A does not need to mention *Leviathan* in order to respond to B adequately, and the sentence could very well be omitted with no disruption to the flow of the dialogue. Also, A's accusation that B had been "tampering with *Leviathan*" seems to run counter to what B actually said in the preceding line. If anything, B is faithfully retelling the account of sense perception from *Leviathan* without alteration.<sup>43</sup> If A's declaration is not in reference to B's retelling, then what purpose could the declaration serve?

If this statement on *Leviathan* in the middle of *Philosophical Problems* is not in reference to the exchange between A and B, might this sentence be a direct appeal to the reader? That is to say, Hobbes might have included this passage as a reference to something occurring outside of the narrative: a shift in perspective that Hobbes wanted to share with his devoted readers. If we are to take Hobbes as literally saying that he can perceive the reader's doctrine, and that this doctrine may persuade the reader (or those like the reader) to tamper with *Leviathan*, what could that doctrine be? Hobbes only discusses two doctrines in the preceding pages of *Philosophical Problems*, and they appear only in the Epistle Dedicatory: "the doctrine of natural causes" and the "doctrine

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<sup>43</sup> "So that Sense in all cases, is nothing els but originall fancy, caused (as I have said) by the pressure, that is, by the motion, of externall things upon our Eyes, Eares, and other organs thereunto ordained" (*Leviathan*, I.1.86).

of the kingdom of Christ.”<sup>44</sup> Which of these two doctrines does Hobbes attribute to the reader in the middle of *Philosophical Problems*?

With the exception of the discussion on spirits and apparitions at the end of the seventh chapter,<sup>45</sup> *Philosophical Problems* is devoid of any extended theological discussion. Given his apology made in the Epistle Dedicatory for any incendiary theological assertions made in *Leviathan*, it seems likely that Hobbes wanted to assure the doctors of divinity that there was nothing of interest to them in the dialogue. Even when the characters discuss spirits, the subject is quickly dismissed as “no part of the subject of natural philosophy” and left at that.<sup>46</sup> *Philosophical Problems* is primarily concerned with natural phenomena, and it is reasonable to assume that its readers were more inclined towards the doctrine of natural causes than towards the doctrine of the kingdom of Christ. Furthermore, it seems plausible that Hobbes wanted to appeal to his fellow geometricians by placing his direct message to them in a place that would be significant to any geometrician: the centerpoint. Therefore, it is plausible to consider that the line containing *Leviathan* is intended to be a direct statement from Hobbes to those who follow the doctrine of natural causes. This doctrine is certainly something that Hobbes could perceive in others, since Hobbes himself is a proponent of the doctrine of natural causes. However, why would another scientist want to tamper with *Leviathan*?

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<sup>44</sup> *Philosophical Problems*, pp. 3, 5.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

The most obvious reason would be if the science in *Leviathan* was flawed in some way or could be improved upon. Perhaps Hobbes realizes that *Leviathan* is open not only to theological criticism, but scientific criticism as well. While Hobbes does not admit any flaws in *Leviathan*, he may realize that his science can be improved upon. In other words, *Leviathan* is not tamper proof. This statement can also be read as a confession, for if Hobbes shares the same doctrine as the intended audience of the line, then Hobbes is admitting that he himself may also be tampering with *Leviathan*. Given that this line is also the last time in Hobbes's dialogues that *Leviathan* is mentioned by name, one can only assume that Hobbes did not want the readers to refer to it in his subsequent dialogues.

This one line alone—however intriguing—is not in itself sufficient proof that Hobbes disavowed the political science that was the foundation of *Leviathan*. However, the line *does* support the theory that Hobbes might be using dialectic as a way to test new concepts or refine old ones. It is in this sense that Hobbes may be tampering with *Leviathan*, and it is through dialectic that Hobbes can develop various alternatives to *Leviathan* in a constructive manner.

If Hobbes wanted to re-evaluate his own ideas, what exactly did he want to re-evaluate? Hobbes gives us a clue that he intends to explore concepts in *Behemoth* different from those he had explored in *Leviathan*. The first and only time in *Behemoth* where we encounter Hobbes speaking as himself occurs in the Epistle Dedicatory to Lord Arlington. After discussing the general overview and plan of *Behemoth*, Hobbes claims

that “there can be nothing more instructive towards loyalty and justice than the memory, while it lasts, of that war,”<sup>47</sup> which in this context refers to the English Civil War.

This statement is important because it runs counter to Hobbes’s understanding of political epistemology as previously stated in his pre-Restoration philosophy. Specifically, Hobbes believed that his science achieved a level of certainty that memory or common experience could never hope to achieve. The objective of science is to elucidate “generall, eternall, and immutable Truth” that does not rely on a recollection of past events that may be imperfect or incomplete.<sup>48</sup> By comparison, memory is described as a “decaying sense” that imagines, with varying degrees of accuracy, sense perceptions long after they are first received.<sup>49</sup> Given the choice between the memory of a singular—albeit important—event, and a scientific understanding of the causes of civil war, one would think that Hobbes would prefer the latter.

Yet Hobbes does not seem to be making that claim in *Behemoth*’s Epistle Dedicatory. Instead, he states that there is “nothing more instructive” than the memory of the civil war. *Behemoth* was Hobbes’s last published work on politics, and since the Epistle Dedicatory is the only time in the work that Hobbes speaks as himself, Hobbes’s claim about the importance of the memory of the civil war is the last official statement by

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<sup>47</sup> *Behemoth*, p. liii.

<sup>48</sup> “By which definition it is evident, that we are not to account as any part of thereof, that originall knowledge called Experience, in which consisteth Prudence: Because it is not attained by Reasoning, but found as well in Brute Beasts, as in Man; and is but a Memory of successions of events in times past, wherein the omission of every little circumstance altering the effect, frustrateth the expectation of the most Prudent: whereas nothing is produced by Reasoning aright, but generall, eternall, and immutable Truth,” (*Leviathan*, IV.46.332).

<sup>49</sup> *Leviathan*, I.2.88-90.

Hobbes on the subject speaking as himself. As we have seen, Hobbes is a careful writer. He does not choose words casually, and in the case of *Behemoth's* Epistle Dedicatory, Hobbes chooses to write about the importance of the memory in superlative terms. The significance of this claim cannot be overstated, for if there is truly “nothing more instructive towards loyalty and justice than the memory, while it lasts,” of the English Civil War, then by consequence, all other instructors are—at best—not fully instructive, or at worst, not instructive towards loyalty and justice at all.

This might imply *Leviathan* and Hobbes's science in general may not be the best instructors, for if they were, we would expect Hobbes to inform his readers that they need to refer back to his earlier works to understand loyalty and justice completely. However, Hobbes does not refer his readers to any of his other works in *Behemoth's* Epistle Dedicatory, nor does he refer to any of his works by name in the *Behemoth* manuscript proper.<sup>50</sup> All we have as readers of Hobbes is a rather definitive statement that the English Civil War itself has something to teach those who are still able to recollect it, and that those who are able to recollect it understand the need for loyalty and justice in a better way than those who cannot. Hobbes does not promote his science here as an alternative, nor does he claim that his history is the definitive recollection of the English Civil War. If anything, Hobbes seems to be questioning or challenging the role of

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<sup>50</sup> There is one point in the dialogue when A states that “the rules of *just* and *unjust* sufficiently demonstrated, and from principles evident to the meanest capacity, have not been wanting; and not withstanding the obscurity of their author, have shined, not only in this, but also in foreign countries, to men of good education” (*Behemoth*, p. 39). This might be a veiled reference to Hobbes's *Leviathan*, but the fact that A refuses to name the work or the author supports the notion that Hobbes was reluctant to refer to the work.



science as a teacher of moral duties which, if correct, constitutes a departure from his previous conception of the role of science as an instructor of moral duties.

This one statement from *Behemoth*'s Epistle Dedicatory alone does not show that Hobbes rejected his earlier science. What it *does* show is that Hobbes is assessing—or reassessing—the experience of the English Civil War as a teacher of political principles. Implied in this reassessment is a reassessment of science, because Hobbes had always positioned science as a better alternative to experience and prudence as a teacher of political principles. This reassessment of science does not imply, however, that Hobbes is necessarily rejecting his science. Since *Behemoth* is a series of exchanges between two characters, Hobbes may be of two minds, trying to refine or reconcile his understanding of political science through a crucible of his own design. Therefore, it is no surprise that *Behemoth* is written in philosophical dialectic, since it is a form that lends itself beautifully to the purposes of Hobbes.

## **Section 2: Hobbes's Dialectical Style**

We have explored the reasons *why* Hobbes would write in dialectic, but we have yet to explore *how* Hobbes wrote in dialectic. The best place to start understanding Hobbes's dialectical style is to examine Hobbes's use of characters. A survey of Hobbes's extant dialogues shows that he limited the characters he used to two per dialogue. This is typical of the style of the time. Eugene Purpus noticed that most dialogues written in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries “were more closely allied with a question-and-answer box or a didactic catechism than with realistic

conversation between credible human beings.”<sup>51</sup> Purpus places Hobbes’s dialogues into this group of question-and-answer monographs, noting that “this charge can be directed...against serious works of considerable length, such as Hobbes’ *Behemoth*, *Decameron Physiologicum*, and *Seven Philosophical Problems*.”<sup>52</sup>

Hobbes’s dialogues also deviate from the question-and-answer format in a few important ways. The convention at the time Hobbes was writing his dialogues was to label the characters Q and A, corresponding to the character that asks the question and the character that provides the answer.<sup>53</sup> Hobbes’s dialogues never specifically designate the character who questions or the character who answers through the use of symbols. While it is true that Hobbes generally designates the characters as A and B, it is by no means clear that the letters always correspond to a certain role Hobbes has in mind for the character. In *Seven Philosophical Problems*, Hobbes begins the dialogue with A asking the question and B responding in turn. However, this is not the case in *Behemoth*, as the dialogue begins with a statement by A rather than with a question for B. In *A Dialogue*, Hobbes breaks with the convention completely, referring to his characters by occupation rather than by A and B. What these variations indicate is that Hobbes did not limit himself to any seventeenth century convention for dialectical writing. Instead, his dialogues were more complex and he varied his style based on what he was trying to accomplish in each work.

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<sup>51</sup> See Purpus (1950), p. 49.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 49, note 12.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

This does not imply that Hobbes's dialogues do not share a pattern. All of his dialogues contain some discussion on politics even when the overall theme of a dialogue does not particularly include politics. A prime example of this is *Philosophical Problems*: a work of natural science that, as shown in the previous section, can also be interpreted as an attack against philosophical scholasticism. *Decameron Physiologicum* is another dialogue on natural science that has a political message. Unlike *Philosophical Problems*, *Decameron Physiologicum* has no introduction or dedicatory statement that describes the manuscript's intent. However, the opening chapter of *Decameron Physiologicum* shows the political intent of the work. The dialogue starts with A wondering whether philosophy is something to be praised or despised.<sup>54</sup> B then answers A's question by claiming that "the honor and scorn falleth finally not upon philosophy, but the professors."<sup>55</sup> The rest of the chapter is a clarification of a distinction that is familiar to readers of Hobbes: the distinction between relying upon "what other men say" to discover the truth about natural causes, and relying "only upon reason" to discover the truth about natural causes.<sup>56</sup> B then explains the problem of believing what other men say about the world. He claims that men by nature "would have all the world, if they could, to fear and obey them," and because of this, scholars are more likely to be "engaged in the maintenance of an error ... for the saving of their authority" than to

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<sup>54</sup> See *Decameron Physiologicum*, hereafter referred to as *Decameron*, in *English Works* Vol. VII (London: John Bohn, 1845), "I have heard exceedingly commended a kind of thing which I do not well understand, though it be much talked of, by such as have not otherwise much to do, by the name of philosophy; and the same again by others as much despised and derided: so that I cannot tell whether it be good or ill, nor what to make of it, though I see many other men that thrive by it" (p. 71).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

admit the truth that proves them wrong.<sup>57</sup> B then gives us an example that Hobbes used in *Behemoth*: the account of the Ethiopian priests before the reign of Ergamenes as told by Diodorus Siculus.<sup>58</sup> Due to their knowledge of the heavenly bodies, the priests “made their kings ... to stand in awe of them, that they durst not either eat or drink but what and when they prescribed; no nor live, if they said the gods commanded them to die.”<sup>59</sup> B also explains that the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers “were more addicted to moral than to natural philosophy” and that they wrote “upon no other principles than their own passions and presumptions, without any respect to the laws of the commonwealth, which are the ground and measure of all true morality.”<sup>60</sup> B then explains the effect of Christianity on philosophy, claiming that “the freedom of philosophy was to the power spiritual very dangerous.”<sup>61</sup> This view of philosophy ultimately led to “the Schools” which “were erected by the Pope and Emperor...to answer and confute the heresies of the philosophers.”<sup>62</sup> At this point, A seems satisfied that understanding what other philosophers say about natural causes is too fraught with self-interest and error to be accurate. Therefore, A is ready to understand the definitions necessary in order to start his own exploration of the subject. The first definition A must understand is that of body, which immediately brings up the problem of how to differentiate the perception of a body

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>58</sup> See the account of Diodorus Siculus as it appears in *Behemoth*’s second dialogue, pp. 93-94.

<sup>59</sup> *Decameron*, p. 74.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 75-76.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

from the actual body under investigation. B explains that perceptions of bodies “are all but fancies” and that these must be distinguished from the actual body under investigation, which B defines as “any thing that hath a being in itself, without the help of sense.”<sup>63</sup> Now that A understands the difference between a body and an essence, he is ready to begin investigating natural causes on his own.

Although *Decameron Physiologicum* is a scientific dialogue, its aims can be said to be political as well. Part of the problem Hobbes perceives with political thought is that philosophical authorities dominate it and these philosophical authorities have self-interested motives that are in direct competition with science in understanding the world as it truly is. The first chapter of *Decameron Physiologicum* is an attempt to free the reader from acquiescing to philosophical authorities simply because of reputation and, instead, encourages the reader to seek out better explanations of the world.

*Philosophical Problems* was Hobbes’s earliest dialogue (1662), while *Decameron Physiologicum* was one of his later dialogues (1678). Both are similar in terms of style as both begin with a student (A) asking a question of Hobbes himself (B). The reason B cannot be anyone else but Hobbes in these two dialogues is that B is identified as the author of works Hobbes wrote. In *Philosophical Problems*, B admits that “it was I that writ” the paper on the duplication of the cube that Hobbes himself sent to Paris.<sup>64</sup> In *Decameron Physiologicum*, A identifies B as the author of *De Corpore*: a work that A

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., pp. 80-81.

<sup>64</sup> *Philosophical Problems*, p. 59.

uses to understand “the causes of the diversity of colours.”<sup>65</sup> The student’s initial question or request for clarification is the inciting incident that moves both of these dialogues forward. In terms of chronology, *A Dialogue* falls somewhere between the two scientific works: later than 1662 and before 1678.<sup>66</sup> Like the scientific works, *A Dialogue* starts with a question from the lawyer to the philosopher about why “the study of the law is less rational, than the study of mathematics.”<sup>67</sup> In this way, *A Dialogue* is similar to the scientific dialogues, but the similarity ends here. Not only does Hobbes refer to his characters by profession in *A Dialogue*, but also the professions are important in understanding the meaning of the exchanges.

The full title of *A Dialogue* implies that the conversation is between a philosopher and a student of the common law, suggesting at first glance that the lawyer is the student of the philosopher. However, as Cropsey suggests, “Hobbes considers the members of the legal profession, bench as well as bar, to be studiers of something that they do not make but in which it is their duty simply to become versed.”<sup>68</sup> While the lawyer character is technically a student, it would be a mistake to assume that he is a student of the philosopher character, as the lawyer is both a student of the law and of philosophy. Similarly, while the philosopher character understands the laws of natural philosophy, he

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<sup>65</sup> *Decameron*, p. 175. It should be noted that A incorrectly identifies the section in *De Corpore* on color as chapter 24. Color is actually covered in chapter 27 alongside the perception of light and heat. That said, much of the work in chapter 27 is reliant on the principles explained in chapter 24, as chapter 24 explains reflection and refraction. Cf. *De Corpore* IV.27.459-462 with the principle of refraction described in III.24.

<sup>66</sup> See above in chapter I, p. 33, note 70 for Noel Malcom’s assessment of the dating for *A Dialogue*.

<sup>67</sup> *A Dialogue*, p. 53.

<sup>68</sup> See Cropsey’s introduction to *A Dialogue*, p. 10.

does not understand the common law and how it is practiced. This makes *A Dialogue* is a conversation between two experts on a subject in which both can claim some expertise: the law. What makes the characters in *A Dialogue* different is what kind of law each character understands; the lawyer is an expert in the common law, while the philosopher is an expert in the laws of reason. While the lawyer character utters the opening question, the philosopher through the course of the dialogue asks rather basic questions of the lawyer such as the purpose of statute law.<sup>69</sup> This makes the philosopher just as much of a questioner as the lawyer, making *A Dialogue* a discussion between relative equals in terms of status. Unlike the scientific dialogues, *A Dialogue* portrays more than a simple lesson between Hobbes and a student. Instead, *A Dialogue* portrays a clash of perspectives concerning the topic at hand: the degree to which the practitioners of the common law follow the law of reason.

On the surface, *Behemoth* seems to have more in common stylistically with the scientific dialogues than with *A Dialogue*. Many who have examined *Behemoth's* style conclude that it is a “doctor and student dialogue” predicated on the assumption that the doctor (A) teaches the student (B).<sup>70</sup> According to this view, the lesson that A teaches is Hobbes’s science found in *Leviathan* and other treatises. This has led scholars to conclude that *Behemoth's* dramatic content centers around the success or failure of the doctor character in educating the student character in Hobbesian political principles.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *A Dialogue*, pp. 55, 57.

<sup>70</sup> See Flinker (1989), pp. 10-11; Kraynak (1990), pp. 34-35; and Vaughan (2002), pp. 114-115.

<sup>71</sup> Flinker (1989) states, “The failure of ‘B’ to become intellectually independent of ‘A’ through the means of the dialogue, is a vindication of Hobbes’s view that proper teaching should not involve controversy” (p.

However, this interpretation rests on the assumption that A is the elder doctor teaching a naïve and younger B, an assumption that no scholar who has written about *Behemoth* has ever attempted to explain. One can only surmise that the rationale behind the assumption is the comment B makes about A's age in the first lines of *Behemoth*, coupled with the fact that B is the one who asks most of the questions. Specifically, B refers to the fact that A "lived in that time and in that part of" his "age, wherein men used to see best into good and evil."<sup>72</sup> B also admits that during the period between 1640 and 1660, he "could not then see so well" the nature of the events as they transpired.<sup>73</sup> Traditionally, scholars have interpreted both of these statements in the opening lines of *Behemoth* as an indication of the relative ages of the two characters, and consequently, have surmised that the relationship between the two characters is that of master and student. However, Hobbes never explicitly indicates the relationship between A and B, so any assumption that one of the characters is deferential to the other is a matter of conjecture. Furthermore, while the text may indicate an age difference between the two characters, the most important difference is in perspective. A proposes that his understanding of the events between 1640 and 1660 affords him a knowledge of injustice that is superior to that of others. This is because it came "as from the Devil's Mountain": an allusion to the

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21). Vaughan (2002) disagrees that the pedagogy was a failure by determining that "[b]y the end of *Behemoth*, however, 'B' is much closer to 'A's position, implying that evil principles, both religious and secular, are those that lead to civil discord" (p. 133).

<sup>72</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 1.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*



Biblical mountain where Satan showed Jesus all the nations of the world.<sup>74</sup> B admits that he could not see the events as well as A claims to have seen them at the time when the events occurred, but nowhere does B admit that he knows nothing of the events. While the assumption is that B was a child during 1640 to 1660, the text itself only states that B could not “then” see the events as well as A, meaning that at the time the events occurred, A may have had a better perspective. The text, however, is silent on whether B can see the events clearly in retrospect, or at the time the discussion takes place, which is some time after the events of 1640 to 1660. The notion that the characters are more equal than unequal makes more sense when we examine the implications of B’s observation that A was in that part of his age where he could see best into good and evil. This observation implies that B knew what age is best for seeing good and evil, further implying that he himself is old enough to understand how perspectives change. Though there may be an age difference between the two characters, there is no indication that this age difference makes B’s recollection any less valid than A’s recollection. Instead of examining *Behemoth* as the education of B, *Behemoth* seems to be a test of A’s recollection to see if it is in any way superior to B’s recollection.

As we have seen with *Philosophical Problems* and *Decameron Physiologicum*, Hobbes wrote dialogues that mimic the discourse between teacher and student. However, there are enough differences between Hobbes’s teacher and student dialogues and *Behemoth* to reconsider whether *Behemoth* is a teacher and student dialogue in the same category as *Philosophical Problems* and *Decameron Physiologicum*. Hobbes’s teacher

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<sup>74</sup> See Flinker (1989), pp. 12-13.

and student dialogues typically start with a question by A, who assumes the role of the student, and Hobbes portrays himself as B. This is not the case in *Behemoth*; it is unclear whether Hobbes wanted to be identified with either character.<sup>75</sup> The character most associated with the teacher in the literature is A. However, Hobbes does not associate himself with A in *Behemoth* as he associates himself with B in his scientific dialogues. If anything, Hobbes takes active steps to disassociate himself from *Behemoth's* A.<sup>76</sup> *Behemoth* starts with a statement by A that he has a clear understanding of injustice and the significance of the English Civil War. However, A's description is so cryptic that B is unable to understand the merits of A's perspective without further clarification. Both Flinker and Vaughan view this opening statement by A as a temptation: a rhetorical strategy by A to entice B into asking further questions.<sup>77</sup> In this sense, A succeeds in tempting B, because B asks A to clarify his assertion "by the relation of the actions you

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<sup>75</sup> Royce MacGillivray (1970) suspected that "Hobbes identified himself more closely with the doctor A." However, MacGillivray also noticed that B is also "an eloquent Hobbesian" (p. 179). Other scholars have determined that neither character can be said to speak for Hobbes exclusively. Goldsmith in the introduction to the second edition of *Behemoth* claims that "both A and B express Hobbesian opinions; as Wallis said of Hobbes's scientific dialogues, *Behemoth* is a conversation between Thomas and Hobbes" (p. xi). Robert Kraynak (1990) would make a similar claim, stating that "both the doctor (A) and the student (B) appear to speak for Hobbes, with the student usually asking naïve questions and the doctor responding" (p. 34).

<sup>76</sup> Consider A's admission that "the rules of *just* and *unjust* sufficiently demonstrated, and from principles evident to the meanest capacity, have not been wanting; and not withstanding the obscurity of their author, have shined, not only in this, but also in foreign countries, to men of good education" (*Behemoth*, p. 39). While A's description of the "rules of *just* and *unjust* sufficiently demonstrated" is reminiscent of *Leviathan*, he refuses to name the work or claim that the work is his.

<sup>77</sup> Flinker (1989) states that "the initial contact between 'A' and 'B' leads us to make certain kinds of assumptions about the speakers and their motivations. 'A's metaphor summarizes his view of the years of Civil War in England as a model for illustrating all human evil, which 'B' asks to see" (p. 12). Vaughan (2002) has a similar interpretation as he states that "the drama of the dialogue follows the education of 'B', but only after he is tempted by 'A.' *Behemoth* opens with a scene of temptation, even making reference to the temptation of Christ from Matthew 4:8 and Luke 4:5" (p. 123).

then saw, and of their causes, pretensions, justice, order, artifice, and event.”<sup>78</sup> However, it is important to note that by starting the dialogue with the statement about the vision from the Devil’s Mountain, A also exposes his point of view to criticism. *Behemoth* is in some sense the story of A’s defense of his position that the perspective from the Devil’s Mountain is better than B’s in some way. This is different from the task of the instructor in the scientific dialogues. In the scientific dialogues, the mind of the student character (A) is truly “like a clean paper, fit to receive whatsoever” Hobbes (B) shall imprint in it.<sup>79</sup> This is not the case in *Behemoth*, as B already has a perspective about politics that he is willing to defend against A.

Given these differences, it is possible that Hobbes is employing a different strategy in *Behemoth* from the one he employed in his teacher and student dialogues. This becomes clearer when we see the points in *Behemoth* where A and B clash. One subject that creates conflict is science: a topic that will be examined more thoroughly in chapter III. Suffice it for now to say that the relationship between A and B in *Behemoth* is more like the relationship between the philosopher and the lawyer in *A Dialogue* than it is like the relationship between A and B in Hobbes’s other dialogues. Rather than a portrayal of pedagogy, *Behemoth* and *A Dialogue* seem to portray a clash of perspectives, with Hobbes refusing to take a side.

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<sup>78</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 1.

<sup>79</sup> *Leviathan*, II.30.379. It should be noted here that the “clean paper” analogy is used by Geoffrey Vaughan (2002) to describe *Behemoth*’s B: “that his mind is like ‘clean paper, fit to receive whatsoever’ ‘A’ shall imprint in it” (p. 131).

If *Behemoth* and *A Dialogue* exhibit a form of dialectic different from the teacher and student dialectic of the scientific dialogues, then what is this different form? Considering for a moment that Hobbes was familiar with both Aristotle and Cicero, he may have tried to emulate the dialectical style that existed in antiquity rather than the dialectical style that became fashionable in Hobbes's own time. The classical style Hobbes seems to be emulating might be compared to what Werner Jaeger later identified as "the dialogue of scientific discussion."<sup>80</sup> It is a form that Jaeger attributes to Aristotle, and consists of two characters that set "speech against speech, thus reproducing the actual life of research in the later Academy."<sup>81</sup> While one of the characters represented a kind of teacher, this teacher was more of a moderator than an instructor. This character "took the lead, gave the subject, and summed up the results at the end."<sup>82</sup> Except for having a procedural function, the teacher has the same status as that of the other character. In short, the dialogue of scientific discussion is a dialogue between intellectual equals rather than a portrayal of pedagogy between teacher and student.

*Behemoth* better fits the pattern of a dialogue of scientific discussion than it fits the pattern of a teacher and student pedagogy. B does not accept A's conclusions about science and politics at face value, but instead challenges A's assertions in order to discover some ground agreeable to both. As far as characterizations are concerned,

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<sup>80</sup> Jaeger (1948). It should be noted here that the bases for Jaeger's conclusion are the "remaining fragments of [Aristotle's] dialogues, together with the reports of antiquity and the imitations of later writers (he had an especially powerful influence on Cicero)," leading Jaeger to "infer that Aristotle invented a new kind of literary dialogue, namely the dialogue of scientific discussion" (p. 28).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

Hobbes portrays his character A as an academic examining the civil war as an intellectual exercise “as from the Devil’s mountain.”<sup>83</sup> This would seem to fit Hobbes himself or someone like him, using reason to gain a perspective on events not witnessed firsthand.<sup>84</sup> The fact that Hobbes does not associate himself with A means that he may also be wary of A’s perspective: that reason can serve as a kind of “Devil’s Mountain” to those seeking the truth about politics. In contrast to A’s personality, B’s personality is more grounded, drawing A back to solid examples rather than philosophical conjecture. As will be shown in the next chapter, B has little confidence in scientific conclusions when they are not backed up by historical facts. If we are to see A as the pre-Restoration Hobbes who wrote *Leviathan*, B serves as the personification of Hobbes’s doubts about his philosophy after the Restoration. By examining the flow of the dialogue in this way, B’s line that “he could not then see so well” the events from 1640 to 1660 takes on a completely new significance. Assuming that B is also Hobbes, the line may indicate that he may see the significance of the events more clearly in retrospect than he did at the time they were occurring. What will be made clear in the following chapters is that Hobbes’s dialogues depart from *Leviathan* not only in terms of style, but also in terms of substance. Specifically, Hobbes takes a more realistic or even pessimistic approach to the question of whether his science can create the political stability he once thought it

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<sup>83</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 1.

<sup>84</sup> It should be noted that in 1640, “fearing for his safety,” Hobbes fled to France. He would not return to England until after *Leviathan* was published in 1651. See “The Prose Life” in *Human Nature and De Corpore Politico*, ed. J.C.A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 247-249.

could. In short, Hobbes himself might be closer to B's position at the time of *Behemoth's* writing than previously assumed.

Now that Hobbes's motivations and style have been explored, it is time to explore the possibility that the dialogues Hobbes penned after *Leviathan* reflect Hobbes's growing pessimism about his previous conception of political science. This argument becomes more compelling when we consider the problems Hobbes's philosophy faced. Criticism from the scholarly community, idealistic exuberance about the potential of science to create peace, the peculiar circumstances of the Restoration, and an incomplete assessment of the role of political skill are all reasons why Hobbes may have wanted to reevaluate his political science. In short, Hobbes had ample reason to doubt his treatises, and therefore, it should come as no surprise that we find a careful, more guarded Hobbes in *Behemoth* and other dialogues. We find a Hobbes that not only questions the philosophical tradition, but also questions—however delicately—his own philosophical system. In short, what this study will show in Hobbes's post-Restoration dialogues is a different Hobbes, if only by degree. The next chapter will explore these differences as expressed in Hobbes's last word on politics: *Behemoth*.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PROBLEM OF SCIENCE TEACHING TRUTH TO POWER

#### Section 1: Hobbes's Scientific Idealism

Before discussing how Thomas Hobbes approaches the subject of political science in his dialogues, it is necessary to understand what Hobbes was trying to accomplish in his treatises. Despite the many claims that Hobbes was a realist,<sup>1</sup> his faith in the power of science to solve the perennial problems of politics makes him appear to be an idealist. What Hobbes was trying to achieve can be found in his conclusion for the section on commonwealth in chapter 31 of *Leviathan*. Hobbes observed that “neither Plato, nor any other philosopher hitherto, hath put into order...or probably proved all the Theorems of Morall doctrine, that men may learn thereby, both how to govern, and how to obey.”<sup>2</sup> By bringing clarity and certainty to moral doctrine, Hobbes hoped to solve the problem of political irresponsibility due to ignorance or erroneous principles. *Leviathan* was designed to convince the public that it is in their interest to obey the sovereign, whether the motivation stems from the fear of violent death or rational calculation. Hobbes

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<sup>1</sup> Murray Forsyth observed that international relations scholars “invoke Hobbes’ name frequently as a kind of shorthand for a particular approach to the international world, one that is also associated with Machiavelli, and usually called the ‘realist’ approach.” See “Thomas Hobbes and the External Relations of States,” *British Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 5, no. 3 (October 1979), p. 196. For examples of how Hobbes’s philosophy is appropriated as a realist philosophy in international relations, see Hans Morgenthau’s *Scientific Man v. Power Politics* (1946); and Hedley Bull’s “Hobbes and the International Anarchy,” *Social Research*, Vol. 48 (Winter 1981), pp. 717-738.

<sup>2</sup> *Leviathan*, II.31.407-408.

intended his *Leviathan* to be read and digested by the subjects of the English Commonwealth. It was his hope that *Leviathan* “may be profitably printed and more profitably taught in the Universities . . . . For seeing the Universities are the Foundations of Civill, and Morall Doctrine, from where the Preachers and the Gentry, drawing such water as they find, use to sprinkle the same . . . upon the People, there ought certainly to be great care taken, to have it pure.”<sup>3</sup> The people could be educated in scientific principles, provided *Leviathan* could be introduced into the university system. From there, Hobbes was convinced that *Leviathan* would be well received, since he took great care to write it in a fashion that was evident to the “meanest capacity.” Simply put, the power of the average human being to reform politics was thought to be small, but when enough people could be brought together to believe in one mode of justice, they could become what Hobbes referred to as “A multitude of men . . . made *One* person.”<sup>4</sup> The reason *Leviathan* could be persuasive lies in the work’s technique. Hobbes saw the resolute-compositive method, borrowed from geometry and the emerging natural sciences of the seventeenth century, as an ideal tool for explaining complicated subjects.<sup>5</sup> This was the power of science, or in Hobbes’s case, political science. He acknowledged that the power of scientific reasoning was small in the overall affairs of the commonwealth at the time of *Leviathan*’s printing. However, he was convinced that political innovation, like all other arts of public use, had its origin in science.<sup>6</sup> Hobbes

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<sup>3</sup> See *Leviathan*’s “Review and Conclusion,” p. 728.

<sup>4</sup> *Leviathan*, I.16.220.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, I.11.165-166.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.



believed that as more of the commonwealth's subjects became exposed to a scientific understanding of public policy, public consensus on the solutions outlined in *Leviathan* could be achieved.

The solution Hobbes proposes at the close of *Leviathan* is more of a hope than a realistic proposal for change. *Leviathan* is a work of political theory, but political theory by itself can do nothing if it cannot be implemented in practice. Thus, the implementation of political theory depends in large part on its ability to be persuasive to those who have the power to put the theory into practice.<sup>7</sup> Hobbes believed that his science of politics was not only persuasive to the powerful, but to all human beings with the ability to understand speech.<sup>8</sup> For Hobbes, the reason science was persuasive was the clarity in which it presents itself. Of course, even the best or clearest teaching will never be persuasive if it is never promulgated.

Unfortunately for Hobbes, *Leviathan* was neither disseminated in the universities as he had hoped, nor was it persuasive to the leading scholars of his time.<sup>9</sup> The list of

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<sup>7</sup> See Victoria Silver's "Hobbes on Rhetoric," chapter 13 in *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes*, edited by Tom Sorell (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 332.

<sup>8</sup> Hobbes engages in a thought experiment in the fourth chapter of *Leviathan* (I,4,103-4). He considers whether a man who is "perfectly deaf and dumb" could ever apply the rule that "every triangle hath its three angles equall to two right angles." Hobbes determines that the person could deduce the connection between right angles and a specific triangle, but would be unable to formulate a general rule that would apply to all triangles. Without any conception of words, the deaf-mute would have to deduce a rule for every triangle as if it were a unique case. Therefore, the ability of a person to generate or apply a theory is predicated on the assumption that the person is capable of understanding words.

<sup>9</sup> James Harrington's major political work, *Oceana*, is filled with arguments against *Leviathan*. "Wherefore, to set that which Leviathan saith of arms and of contracts a little straighter: he that can graze this beast with the great belly, as the Turk doth his timariots, may well deride him that imagines he received his power by covenant, or is obliged unto any such toy: it being in this case only that covenants are but words and breath" (*Oceana*, pp. 13-14). Edward Hyde, the Earl of Clarendon, was one of the leading Royalist intellectuals of the time. For a detailed summary of the relationship between Clarendon and Hobbes, see Perez Zagorin's article: "Clarendon and Hobbes," *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 57 (1985). Much of the Royalist criticism of Hobbes centers on his possible role in what has been labeled "The

political philosophers, historians, and theologians who wrote arguments against Hobbes's science is impressive, and the arguments themselves include reasoning that is just as impressive as Hobbes's science itself.

This is particularly true of James Harrington, whose work *Oceana* serves not only as a critique of *Leviathan*, but as a work of political philosophy in its own right. As a supporter of republics, Harrington had political reasons for rejecting *Leviathan*'s support of absolute monarchy. However, *Oceana* is far from a mere polemic, and Harrington is far from a mere politician. Harrington understood the political science of the ancients, but he was also a reader of Machiavelli. The first chapter of *Oceana* was Harrington's attempt to reconcile both lines of reasoning against Hobbes's science in *Leviathan*. Harrington can do this because he reads Machiavelli as a successor to the ancients, specifically in terms of the political theory of classical republicanism. The essence of Harrington's critique of *Leviathan* is that Hobbes's conception of commonwealth consists of an "empire of men and not of laws."<sup>10</sup> He argues that *Leviathan* depends too strongly on the absolute power of the sovereign whose legitimacy depends on the right of the sword rather than any legal mandate or covenant. Furthermore, Harrington notes that *Leviathan* holds monarchy to a standard of perfection with regard to stability that seems

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Engagement Controversy." For more information on Hobbes's role in the Engagement movement, see Quentin Skinner's article: "Conquest and Consent: Thomas Hobbes and the Engagement Controversy," from Aylmer, G. E. *The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement 1646-1660*, Chapter 3 (Macmillan, 1972); and Glenn Burgess's article, "Contexts for the Writing and Publication of Hobbes's *Leviathan*," *History of Political Thought*, Vol. XI, No. 4 (1990). In addition, Bishop John Bramhall wrote a theological critique known as "the catching of Leviathan," accusing Hobbes of atheism. Hobbes wrote two responses to Bishop Bramhall's claims found in "An Answer to Bishop Bramhall's Book, called 'The Catching of the Leviathan,'" in English Works IV; as well as the aforementioned *Liberty, Necessity, and Chance* in English Works V and VI.

<sup>10</sup> *Oceana*, p. 9.

absurd. Harrington argues that it is impossible to construct a government where “no man or men, in or under it, can have the interest” or “the power to disturb it with sedition.”<sup>11</sup> Moreover, Harrington shows that monarchy is no more or less immune to sedition than any other sort of government, since even the most absolute governments are vulnerable to sedition either within the army or within the nobility.<sup>12</sup> After all, both Harrington and Hobbes wrote at a time when the monarchy of Charles I was itself challenged by both the military and the nobility: segments of the commonwealth that had the interest and power to see the monarchy end.

While there is no specific mention of either Harrington or *Oceana* in Hobbes’s *Behemoth*, Hobbes seems to concede to Harrington’s critique. That is to say, Hobbes shows that even an absolute government like Charles I’s is vulnerable to sedition by both the army and the nobility when we include the clergy as part of the nobility alongside the rest of the House of Lords. Hobbes depended in large part on the persuasive power of science to convince citizens that it is their duty to obey the sovereign. In this way, Hobbes was optimistic that science—and his science in particular—could create peace by teaching citizens their duty, and providing a blueprint for how a commonwealth should institute sovereignty. However, Hobbes wrote *The Elements of Law*, *De Corpore*, *De Cive*, and *Leviathan* either before or during the English Civil War, while he would write *Behemoth* after the Civil War. Accordingly, Hobbes gained a perspective that was unavailable to him when he was producing his philosophical treatises, as he was able to

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<sup>11</sup> See J.G.A. Pocock’s edition of *The Political Works of James Harrington* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 179.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

view the war from its beginning through to its conclusion. In his later work, Hobbes had the benefit of reading Harrington's *Oceana*,<sup>13</sup> and may have wanted to modify or clarify several contentious points in his science. Hobbes's use of the term *science* in *Behemoth* only makes this possibility even more likely.

## Section 2: Science in *Behemoth*'s First Dialogue

*Behemoth*'s characters mention science once in each of the four dialogues, with a fifth reference exclusive to the manuscript copy. A conversation between A and B over the ship-money controversy<sup>14</sup> explodes into a heated digression over the ability of the people to elect good members of Parliament. A believes that Charles I was justified in levying the ship-money, because even though statute law prohibits the king from levying a tax without consulting Parliament, the king had the prerogative to levy taxes as sovereign. B seems to disagree, as the Magna Charta under the assent of Henry I claimed that "no man shall be distrained, that is, have his goods taken from him, otherwise than by the law of the land."<sup>15</sup>

The dispute then turns to the integrity of the members of Parliament, with both characters seeming to agree that Parliament was corrupt. The difference between A and

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<sup>13</sup> John Aubrey mentions Thomas Hobbes in Harrington's *Brief Lives* entry. "Whereupon he writ his *Oceana*, printed London (1656). Mr. T. Hobbes was wont to say that Henry Nevill had a finger in that pye; and 'tis like enough. That ingeniose tractat, together with his and H. Nevill's smart discourses and inculcations, dayly at coffee-houses, made many proselytes." Taken from Aubrey's *Brief Lives*, ed. Andrew Clark, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1898), p. 289.

<sup>14</sup> The term Ship-Money was used by Charles I to describe a levy against the residents of coastal towns for the maintenance of the navy. Though not technically a tax, "Voices were raised on every side declaring it to be utterly illegal. Ship money, it was loudly declared, was undeniably a tax, and the ancient customs of the realm, recently embodied in the Petition of Right, had announced with no doubtful voice that no tax could be levied without consent of Parliament." See Samuel Rawson Gardiner's *Fall of the Monarchy of Charles I*, Vol. I (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1882), pp. 56-57.

<sup>15</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 37.

B is whether Parliament could have been any better. A believed that the Parliamentary dispute over the ship-money was “conducting to the ends of some rebellious spirits in this Parliament,”<sup>16</sup> implying that this Parliament was especially corrupt, but not all Parliaments need be so. B believes that any Parliament would have chosen the same course, since “they who were elected, were just such as had been elected for former Parliaments, and as likely to be elected for Parliaments to come,”<sup>17</sup> implying that this Parliament was no more or less imperfect than any other. In this respect, B believes that human beings have certain moral imperfections that cannot be reformed, enlightened, or changed. B claims that “people always have been, and always will be ignorant of their duty to the public, as never meditating anything but their particular interest; in other things following their immediate leaders; which are either the preachers, or the most potent of the gentlemen that dwell amongst them: as common soldiers for the most part follow their immediate captains, if they like them. If you think the late miseries have made men wiser, that will quickly be forgot, and then we shall be no wiser than we were.”<sup>18</sup>

This statement starts with an observation that is familiar to those who have read Hobbes: people are apt to pursue their own interest. B also observes that human beings are apt to look to the spiritual and political authorities they prefer in order to satisfy “other things.” People, as a general rule, look to either religious or secular authorities for advice on how to live, or what to believe beyond simple self-interest. This is a common

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

observation that Hobbes makes throughout his treatises, but one that Hobbes's science intends to defeat on the grounds that "such men, as neither by lawfull authority, nor sufficient study, are competent Judges of the truth."<sup>19</sup> In terms of political pedagogy, science is superior to taking the opinions of authorities at face value. Yet B's line also implies that human beings have the capacity to teach themselves, though there are problems with lessons learned from experience. While it is possible that human beings can learn from their misery, they forget the lessons of history with the passage of time. B does not clarify whether the lessons are forgotten within a single generation or over future generations. Either way, B asserts that the lessons that the people learn because of a calamity such as the English Civil War are, at best, temporary reminders of one's duty to the public.

A never questions the truth of B's assertion. Instead, A poses the question of "why may not men be taught their duty . . . the science of just and unjust . . . from true principles and evident demonstration?"<sup>20</sup> This exchange can be read as an internal debate between two themes in *Behemoth*. On the one hand, B observes that there are certain patterns in history that tend to repeat themselves. A suggests that human beings might not be destined to repeat the same mistakes, for A believes that if men could be taught "the science of just and unjust," they could in fact lose their ignorance, become wise, and prevent errors in judgment from subverting the commonwealth.

B is not so easily convinced and responds by asking, "who can teach what none have learned? Or if any man have been so singular, as to have studied the science of

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<sup>19</sup> *Leviathan*, IV.46.703.

<sup>20</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 39.

justice and equity; how can he teach it safely, when it is against the interest of those that are in possession of the power to hurt him?”<sup>21</sup> Here, B displays his skepticism toward academic solutions to political problems. Assuming that a “science of justice and equity” could ever be found, B believes it might never be taught if it happens to be “against the interest of those that are in possession of the power to hurt” individuals within the commonwealth.

A disregards the issue of how the science of just and unjust can be safely taught, and instead tries to convince him that “the rules of *just* and *unjust* sufficiently demonstrated . . . have not been wanting; and notwithstanding the obscurity of their author, have shined . . . to men of good education.”<sup>22</sup> While A does not mention any of Hobbes’s previous works by name, the characterization of “the rules of just and unjust sufficiently demonstrated” is similar to Hobbes’s characterization of the purposes behind his science.<sup>23</sup> Whether or not this passage refers to Hobbes’s scientific treatises, A concedes that men who appreciated the rules of just and unjust sufficiently demonstrated “are few,” because “many cannot read: many, though they can, have no leisure; and of them that have leisure, the greatest part have their minds wholly employed and taken up

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Consider *De Cive*’s Author’s Preface to the Reader where Hobbes discusses philosophy: “The benefit of it when rightly delivered (that is) when derived from true Principles by evident connexion, we shall then best discern.” (*De Cive*, Author’s Preface, p. 30). Consider also Hobbes’s explanation that “right reason” is “concluding from true principles rightly fram’d, because . . . the whole breach of the Lawes of Nature consists in false reasoning, or rather folly of those men who see not those duties they are necessarily to performe toward others in order to their own conservation” (ibid., II.2.52-53).

by their private businesses or pleasures.”<sup>24</sup> This passage points out a specific problem that political theory faces: it can only ever appeal to a select few. Its rhetorical ability is at first limited to those who can understand the argument, and amongst those who are capable of understanding the argument, only some will have the leisure to busy themselves with books. Of those citizens that possess the leisure time necessary to read books, only a proportion will choose to spend their leisure in study rather than other activities.

Since it is impossible for everyone to learn the science of just and unjust, the science needs to be taught to those intellectual and religious elites who teach the common citizens “from the pulpit and on holidays.”<sup>25</sup> The problem with teaching elites the science of justice is that “the light” of the rules of just and unjust “has been hitherto covered and kept under here by a cloud of adversaries, without the authority of the *Universities*,” and that “the *Universities* have been to this nation, as the wooden horse was to the Trojans.”<sup>26</sup> In other words, the elites who control the universities will not admit any doctrine that fails to promote elite interests. With this passage, A concedes B’s point that academic solutions are only effective if politics allows them to be.

The dialogue does not end here, as B asks A, “what was the Pope’s design in setting up the Universities?”<sup>27</sup> B’s question seems out of place, since the original establishment of the universities by the Pope and Charlemagne was already discussed

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<sup>24</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 39.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*



earlier in the dialogue.<sup>28</sup> Why would B ask a question when he and A already know the answer as established earlier in the dialogue? It seems that B is trying to test A or make A reconsider his earlier statement about the efficacy of academic solutions to the problems of pragmatic politics. A seems to recognize that B is trying to refute his claim about the urgency of university reform. This seems plausible because A avoids responding to B directly, and instead offers a question of his own, asking, “what other design was he like to have, but (what you heard before) the advancement of his own authority in the countries where the Universities were erected?”<sup>29</sup> This question starts a long digression from the narrative of the English Civil War in which A attempts to show B the power of the universities to “astonish the multitude of ignorant men.”<sup>30</sup> The universities do this by making selective use of philosophical authorities such as Aristotle, and by making “more use of his obscurity than of his doctrine,” they justify the rebellious actions of the principal antagonists in civil insurrections.<sup>31</sup>

There is no mention of who “those that are in possession of the power to hurt” may be. Of course, the sovereign has—or at least should have—the power to punish or physically harm citizens, yet *Leviathan* also gives citizens the right to resist physical harm, as Hobbes believes human beings possess the liberty to “defend their lives, which the Guilty man may as well do, as the Innocent.”<sup>32</sup> However, other individuals and

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> *Leviathan*, II.21.270.

institutions (those “immediate leaders” B mentioned) have the power to hurt individuals, not only in a physical sense, but also in a social, spiritual, or economic sense. Of course, *Leviathan* proposes that the sovereign take control of the educational system to protect “against the danger that may arrive to himselfe in his naturall Person, from Rebellion.”<sup>33</sup> *Behemoth* mentions one particular sovereign who attempted to use the universities in this way. Though Henry VIII’s break with Catholicism subsequently led to a reform of the universities in England, the resulting reform did nothing to establish the English monarch as above question. Instead, “the clergy within the Universities . . . and the clergy without the Universities . . . did think that the pulling down of the Pope was the setting up of them (as to England) in his place.”<sup>34</sup> What can a sovereign do when he is not in a position to take control of the educational system, and unable to persuade the elites to cede control without the ability to influence it?

A and B seem to agree that both the nobility and the clergy are powerful elements within the commonwealth, but neither A nor B seems to believe that these factions can be disempowered or dispensed with entirely. When B suggests that sovereigns should “ready money enough to levy and maintain a sufficient army, and then to fall upon”<sup>35</sup> the sovereign’s political rivals, A is shocked. Though the sovereign should “have money enough readily to raise an army to suppress any rebellion,” the sovereign does not have the prerogative to engage in violence “without actual committing such crimes as are

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., II.30.379.

<sup>34</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 56.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

already made capital by the laws.”<sup>36</sup> Though the power of the sovereign is absolute in most respects, A believes that there are limitations on the conduct of a sovereign. Therefore, if these immediate leaders that threaten sovereignty cannot be eliminated or disempowered, they must be persuaded through education that it is their duty to place their ambitions in check and defer to the sovereign. At the conclusion of *Behemoth*’s first dialogue, B thinks it would be wise if “the nobility and gentry know that the liberty of a state is not an exemption from the laws of their own country,”<sup>37</sup> and in this respect B agrees with A. However, A is not even sure that university reform will completely mitigate the problems caused by ambitious elites, for even if “the Universities shall be thus disciplined,” only “from time to time” will “well-principled preachers” come forth, and only “from time to time” will preachers “that are now ill-principled . . . fall away.”<sup>38</sup>

A’s strong critique of the universities has led many scholars to conclude that *Behemoth* supports Hobbes’s argument from *Leviathan*’s review and conclusion: that “the Universities are the Fountains of Civill, and Morall Doctrine” and “there ought certainly to be great care taken, to have it pure.”<sup>39</sup> While this very well may be the case, Hobbes also considered the feasibility of university reform as a practical means of solving the problems of the commonwealth. While B eventually concedes “that we never shall have a lasting peace, till the Universities themselves be . . . reformed,”<sup>40</sup> A spends

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>39</sup> *Leviathan*, Review and Conclusion, p. 728.

<sup>40</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 59

nearly the entire length of *Behemoth*'s first dialogue convincing B that university reform is the best—if not the only—solution to civil war. Even so, the way B states his response leaves the reader wondering whether reforming the universities solves the problem A says it does. On the one hand, the universities must be reformed in order to “imbibe good principles” to the future ministers and gentlemen. On the other hand, in order to reform the universities, the ministers and gentlemen must first “know they have no authority but what the civil power gives them,” and “know that the liberty of the state is not an exemption from the laws of their own country.”<sup>41</sup> It seems that university reform depends on having well educated religious and political elite. But there is no way to create a well-educated elite class without the universities to create them. That is why university reform is problematic as a practical means of preventing civil war: it is too dependent on optimal political circumstances. Even after B's concession, the reader is left to wonder about B's motive for it. Did B concede because he actually believed that university reform was a practical solution to the problem of civil war, or did B concede because A would not continue his narrative until B conceded? Right after B's concession, he attempts to bring A “back to the place from whence” his “curiosity drew” A into the topic of university reform; namely, Parliament's use of the ship-money controversy “to single out . . . the King from his subjects.”<sup>42</sup> At this point, A retires from the conversation, asking B to be patient for “some other day that” B “shall think fit.”<sup>43</sup> Despite all the discussion surrounding the universities in the latter half of *Behemoth*'s

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

first dialogue, the question of whether “late miseries have made men wiser” is never brought up or satisfactorily resolved, and the actual practicality of university reform seems questionable. It would seem that the answer to these questions will have to wait until A and B choose to discuss them again, which will be in the second dialogue.

### Section 3: Science in *Behemoth*’s Second Dialogue

The first mention of science in *Behemoth*’s second dialogue concerns the House of Lords and the nobility. While discussing the trial of the Earl of Strafford, B wonders why the House of Lords is indifferent to “the ruin of the King’s power,” because what happened to Charles I could very well happen to the nobility as a whole.<sup>44</sup> A responds by claiming that the nobility is no more or less “skillful in public affairs, than the knights and burgesses” of the lower house.<sup>45</sup> Though the nobility may be “prudent and able men as any in the land” in terms of private business, they are unable to govern the commonwealth “without infallible rules and the true science of equity and justice.”<sup>46</sup> As we have seen from the first dialogue, the “science of equity and justice” has yet to be fully recognized or respected amongst the elites.

True to his pessimistic manner, B concludes that “it is impossible that any commonwealth in the world . . . should continue long without change, or sedition tending to change, either of the government or the governors.”<sup>47</sup> Like his statement in *Behemoth*’s first dialogue, B is rather wary of A’s belief that a perfect solution can be

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

found to the problem of civil upheaval. A agrees that there has been no solution throughout history, nor have “the greatest commonwealths in the world been long free of sedition,” but maintains that this is due to the “want of rules of justice for the common people to take notice of.”<sup>48</sup> This is again the hope Hobbes holds for his science: that if the science of commonwealth were sufficiently known and practiced, there would be no sedition. B realizes that the scientific solution rests upon a rather tenuous *if*, and doubts whether the elites or the people may ever know or practice the science of justice. B responds by claiming that “all the states in Christendom will be subject to these fits of rebellion, as long as the world lasteth.”<sup>49</sup> A’s only response is that the problem of rebellion “may be easily mended, by mending the Universities.”<sup>50</sup> Yet this seems to run counter to what A previously concluded in dialogue one: that very few ever partake in a university education, and the ones who do are not interested in reforming the universities from within. A sufficiently strong sovereign must force the universities to reform; the sovereign must be strong enough to enact reforms against the powerful elite interests that dominate English politics. We have to wonder how simple or easy this task may be, given that not even Henry VIII could fully neutralize the subversive tendencies within the universities.

Understanding the relative status of the characters has implications in understanding *Behemoth*’s overall message. If we take the view that A speaks as the authoritative Hobbes, we might very well conclude that *Behemoth* is simply a restatement

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

of Hobbes's view that science is the only real solution to the commonwealth. However, as the last chapter showed, B may be just as important to the dialogue as A in terms of *Behemoth's* structure. B does not seem to agree with A, or acknowledge that the problem of sedition can be so easily solved. Instead, B brings A back to the historical record by asking, "How long has the Parliament now sitten?"<sup>51</sup> In fact, the Parliament had been sitting since the Scottish rebellion in 1637, as Charles I was unable to govern effectively without it. B perhaps realizes that the answer to the question of Parliament illustrates the difficulties of university reform better than any other argument, since it shows that Charles I could not govern as he pleased. Because Charles I needed Parliament to levy funds, Parliament became much more defiant toward the king and his allies. The notion that the sovereign *should* reform universities says little about whether sovereigns *could* reform universities, which may be why the dialogue moves from the speculative to the concrete at this stage.

Hobbes chooses to follow his discussion about science and university reform with Charles I's reaction to the sentence of the Earl of Strafford. The reason this discussion is important is that it illustrates how sovereigns are often forced to act contrary to their better judgment because of political considerations. Though Charles I "declared himself unsatisfied concerning the justice" of the Long Parliament toward the Earl of Strafford, the king was nevertheless "counseled to give way to his [the Earl of Strafford's] execution."<sup>52</sup> The reason Charles did not intercede in the execution was political, for he

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

wanted to avoid “the fury of the people,”<sup>53</sup> which was apt to erupt had Charles I intervened.

A recalls how Charles I “did not stick to confess afterwards, that he had done amiss, in that he did not rescue”<sup>54</sup> the Earl of Strafford. B believed that Charles I’s abandonment of Strafford was “an argument of good disposition,” and cites Augustus’ abandonment of Cicero to Antonius as another example where a sovereign must be willing to abandon friends for the sake of maintaining the image that the sovereign does not play favorites.<sup>55</sup> This is something both A and B can agree upon: that friends of the sovereign should not receive special treatment. The term A uses is *preferment*, and he disparages those who seek it, as well as sovereigns who rely on it as a political strategy. A states that those who seek preferment “have missed their aim,” while “princes that with preferment are forced to buy the obedience of their subjects, are already, or must be soon after, in a very weak condition.”<sup>56</sup> The reason why preferential treatment has no place in the commonwealth is that it is a violation of equity: “that Justice be equally administered to all the people.”<sup>57</sup>

We must examine which party Charles I sought to “buy” through preferment. In the case of the Earl of Strafford, the king sought to buy the support of the people, or at least stave off their anger. This is further evidence that Charles I did not have what we

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 71-72.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>57</sup> *Leviathan*, II.30.385.



might call the political capital to govern with the sort of prerogative one might expect from an absolute sovereign. Furthermore, the execution of the Earl of Strafford shows us why the science of equity and justice could do little to help those in the House of Lords or the nobility in general. While the sovereign acting out of preference for other nobles might prevent the ruin of the power within the nobility as a class, the sovereign must not distinguish claims on the basis of class. One might argue that the very notion that one class has special claims above another is itself antithetical to Hobbes's science of commonwealth.<sup>58</sup> The science of equity and justice could do nothing to save one particular noble, the Earl of Strafford, from the charge of treason. Though the charge was questionable, Charles I placated the rebellious elements in his kingdom by upholding the charge, thereby sealing the fate of the Earl of Strafford.

Science is mentioned again in *Behemoth's* second dialogue. This time, the characters are discussing the clergy. A discusses the history of Diodorus Siculus, specifically in regard to the power of the Ethiopian priestly caste over the king. According to this source, it was customary for the priests to force the kings to commit suicide, since "the Kings did obey the priests, not as mastered by force and arms, but as having their reason mastered by superstition."<sup>59</sup> This custom ended, however, when an Ethiopian king named Ergamenes "killed all the priests, abolished the custom, and

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., "The dignities of Lord, Earle, Duke, and Prince are his Creatures. As in the presence of the Master, the Servants are equall, and without any honour at all; So are the Subjects, in the presence of the Sovereign. And though they shine some more, some less, when they are out of his sight; yet in his presence, they shine no more than the Starres in the presence of the Sun" (*Leviathan*, II.18.238).

<sup>59</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 94.

rectified the kingdom according to his will.”<sup>60</sup> Though B believed that the priests were “damnable impostors,” he also believed that Ergamenes’ violence toward them “was cruel.”<sup>61</sup> Was this violence “cruel” according to Hobbes’s science?

In Hobbes’s science of the commonwealth, sovereigns are obligated to preserve the lives and maintain the safety of all the people in the commonwealth. However, the sovereign also possesses the right to execute subjects that rebel against the sovereign.<sup>62</sup> Whether or not the killing of the priests was justified depends on whether the custom of the priests to instruct the king to die was rebellious. If it was rebellion, it certainly was not an armed rebellion or a conspiracy. While Hobbes’s science finds such a custom to be incomprehensible for a king or any other subject to obey, it was nevertheless the custom of Ethiopia. If anything, Ergamenes rebelled against the settled custom. Though the sovereign in Hobbes’s science is not bound to uphold past customs,<sup>63</sup> it is unclear whether Hobbes’s science gives the sovereign the right to take lives when changing the customs. In the Ethiopian case, the sovereign could simply ignore the suicide requests when made, or abolish the custom without resorting to violence. The fact that Ergamenes killed the priestly class when it was questionable whether he needed to do so is the basis for calling the act “cruel.”

Yet just because the cruelty was outside the scope of what a good sovereign should do does not mean that sovereigns should not engage in such cruelty. A agreed

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> *Leviathan*, II.21.265.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., “For the Legislator is he, not by whose authority the Lawes were first made, but by whose authority they now continue to be laws” (ibid., II.26.315).

with B that the murder of the priests was cruel, but A believed that Ergamenes' cruelty was somewhat justified since "the King's act may be colored with the good of his people."<sup>64</sup> A then applies the same reasoning to the English Civil War by placing the blame for the 100,000 dead on the Presbyterian ministers that inspired the Long Parliament. He wonders whether it would have been "better that those seditious ministers, which were not perhaps 1000, had all been killed before they had preached."<sup>65</sup> Though A acknowledges that such a move would be "a great massacre . . . the killing of 100,000 is a greater" massacre.<sup>66</sup> Neither character seems willing to call the use of murder as a political tool righteous or just. Charles I was described by A as the "best King perhaps that ever was" in part because the king did not resort to such murderous measures during his reign. Nevertheless, the Hobbes in *Behemoth* seems to claim that such murderous measures are often necessary if the total number of lives potentially saved is to outweigh the ones taken. This is a departure from A's position on the use of cruelty as a political tool from dialogue one, where A stated that the sovereign should only kill those who are guilty of a capital crime.

B does not question A's statement about the political use of violence by the sovereign. He is simply glad that the Anglican bishops "were out at this business," having been dispossessed of their seats in the House of Lords.<sup>67</sup> Though these bishops were loyal to Charles I, and appeared as "enemies" to the Presbyterian faction blamed for

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<sup>64</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 94.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

the insurrection, there was reason to suspect the Anglican bishops of future treason. In a statement that only appears as an erased thought in the manuscript copy, B argues that the bishops “pretended a divine right (not depending on the King’s leave) to the government of the Church.”<sup>68</sup> Though the bishops may have been loyal, their loyalty was not absolute, and was not based on any scientific reason for being so. This becomes immediately clear in A’s response, disregarding B’s remark about the bishops, underscoring instead “what the reputation of those [theological] sciences can effect among the people.”<sup>69</sup> What the Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Catholic political philosophies share is that they take their bearings from “the babbling philosophy of Aristotle and other Greeks” which “has no affinity with religion, and serves only to breed disaffection, dissention, and finally sedition and civil war.”<sup>70</sup> In other words, the philosophy that comes out of the religious conflict between sects is based upon the strong opinions of a few leading intellectuals: the “doctrinal politics” that Hobbes sought to replace with his conception of political science.<sup>71</sup> According to A, doctrinal politics is hostile to “all true philosophy, especially civil and moral,” because it is a form of reasoning that “looked with an ill aspect upon their interest.”<sup>72</sup> This is presumably why the true science of politics was attacked so vigorously, as it can “never appear propitious

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Robert Kraynak explains how Hobbes tried to bridge the gap between natural necessity and the capacity of human beings as makers of their own political institutions through science. “In so doing, the fully enlightened individual steps outside of the historical realm of doctrinal politics and makes an absolutely new beginning in a timeless realm of natural necessity and artificial construction.” See Kraynak (1989), p. 166.

<sup>72</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 96.

to ambition,” or provide the basis for “an exemption from . . . obedience due to the sovereign power.”<sup>73</sup>

For Hobbes, part of the reason why doctrinal politics is so pervasive in 17<sup>th</sup> century England is that the proponents of it are entrenched in the universities. This is why A believes so strongly in university reform, as he believes that philosophy based on nothing more than authoritative opinion will not last long when it can no longer claim a privileged place as the only doctrine that is permitted to be taught. In contrast, science does not seem to need the institutions of pedagogy to prove its authenticity as true knowledge. Hobbes believed that a properly described science is self-evident to the reader, requiring nothing else than a mind capable of understanding words.<sup>74</sup> When Hobbes’s science comes across a particularly counterintuitive problem, he challenges his reader to look “into himself,” rather than look to the authority of the teacher.<sup>75</sup> In a passage that Hobbes attempted to erase from the manuscript copy of *Behemoth*, A mentions “a company of gentlemen for the promoting of natural philosophy and mathematics,” showing that scientists who believe in the rhetorical power of science are not deterred by the lack of support for science. The problem for A is that “the authority of licensing the books that are written” on science is not in the scientists themselves “but

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Victoria Silver views Hobbes’s *Leviathan* as a rhetorical performance insofar as it is designed to guide the reader to Hobbes’s conclusion without resorting to “knowledge presumed or substantiated by testimony, but from knowledge shared in the process of reading. The truth of a given proposition depends upon our having experienced it, or more accurately, thinking we have, and not upon any technical expertise in political theory we or others possess.” See Silver (1988), p. 362.

<sup>75</sup> *Leviathan*, introduction, p. 82.

in some divines, who have little knowledge in physics, and none at all in mathematics.”<sup>76</sup>

While this seems to be more evidence of Hobbes’s desire to reform the universities, the passage also reveals a not so obvious weakness of Hobbes’s science: it too needs the sanction of authorities in order to claim a privileged position as fact. It would seem that science is not as self-evident and rhetorically persuasive as Hobbes originally surmised. While copies of scientific treatises such as Hobbes’s own are invariably promulgated to interested parties, it would seem that science can do little to further its own cause without some sort of official sanction from authority.

The general consensus among scholars is that Hobbes tried to erase this and other passages from the manuscript copy as they contained “statements of opinion too strong to be made known.”<sup>77</sup> We can certainly see how this passage in dialogue two would be controversial, since it contains accusations against the religious authorities in England at a time when Charles II was attempting to placate the representatives of the various religions in England.<sup>78</sup> This passage shows us that Hobbes was becoming skeptical that science could be responsible for *bringing forth* a strong and stable ruler. Instead, it would seem that the only way that science can ever be useful to the commonwealth is if it is *first promoted* by a strong and stable ruler. Therefore, reforming the universities is of secondary importance to peace; it is second to a sovereign who has the political skill

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<sup>76</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 96.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, preface by Ferdinand Tönnies, p. ix.

<sup>78</sup> “Charles had, moreover, at all times an admirable disinclination to rake over the smouldering embers of the Civil War, a disinclination not at all shared by some of the most fiercely loyal writers of his time. Though most of the inflammatory productions of the ultraroyal [Hobbes] did not come under Charles’s personal attention for censorship, he may have felt it desirable to check the appearance of one when he had the opportunity.” See MacGillivray (1970), p. 181.

necessary to promote peace and stability. This will become more readily apparent as we consider the passage where science is mentioned in dialogue three.

#### **Section 4: Science in *Behemoth's* Third Dialogue**

Dialogue three starts at the time in the narrative when sovereignty had more or less passed to Parliament after Charles I's imprisonment in 1647. Unlike Charles I or previous sovereigns, Parliament would reform the universities in 1648 under the leadership of the Earl of Pembroke, who "together with some of the doctors" in Oxford, systematically "turned out all such as were not of their faction."<sup>79</sup> We can presume that Parliament did this to eliminate the universities as a place of potential dissent. In terms of Hobbes's science, a university or any educational institution "teacheth by publique Authority,"<sup>80</sup> and the sovereign has a vested interest in ensuring that no teachings that are contrary to the maintenance of sovereignty are promulgated. In short, Parliament's reform of the universities appears to be an exercise in good policy. Character A "cannot but commend"<sup>81</sup> the Long Parliament for the university purge, even given A's generally negative opinion concerning the Long Parliament's service. B does not agree, because even though the university professors by A's admission said God's name in vain and were found "in the company of lewd women," B wonders how a man can "correct his vices, better than in the universities erected for that purpose?"<sup>82</sup> For B, the universities

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<sup>79</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 147.

<sup>80</sup> *Leviathan*, II.27.348.

<sup>81</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 147.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

are places where citizens might correct personal vices, but beyond this pedantic function, do not significantly impact the stability of the regime in the way A conceives.

A does not believe that the universities are capable of eliminating the vices of the people. In fact, A believes the opposite: the universities are places that corrupt the citizens. Here, however, A does not cite the corrupting nature of the doctrines proffered there as the cause of the corruption. It is the corrupting environment of the university more than the corrupting doctrines proffered at the university that make it corrupt. In an argument not all that different from those made today,<sup>83</sup> A claims that the universities promote a life and culture of “drunkenness, wantonness, gaming, and other vices consequent to these.”<sup>84</sup> He goes on to say that the Parliament itself had little respect for the universities as places where virtue could be taught, but understood the significance of the institutions as excellent servants “to the clergy; and the clergy, if it be not carefully looked to . . . is an excellent means to divide a kingdom into factions.”<sup>85</sup>

Unlike previous institutions, the Long Parliament was able to appreciate the political significance of the universities, taking measures to eliminate the university as a source of potential dissent. This is exactly what Hobbes recommends a politically astute sovereign should do and the fact that the Long Parliament used the power of sovereignty to reform the universities is telling. While the Long Parliament may have not been the most virtuous institution in England, it may have been a better practitioner of Hobbes’s

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<sup>83</sup> For example, see Murray Sperber’s *Beer and Circus: How Big Time College Sports is Crippling Undergraduate Education*, 2000 (New York: H. Holt).

<sup>84</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 147.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 147-148.



political teaching, at least in terms of maintaining political power. However, political skill is something altogether different from ethical ruler. After A's thorough condemnation of the universities, B asks if there is any place where one may learn "philosophy and other humane sciences ... better than in the Universities?"<sup>86</sup> A responds to this in a similar fashion to the way B responds to him in dialogue one: by asking another question. He asks, "what other sciences? Do not divines comprehend all civil and moral philosophy within their divinity?"<sup>87</sup> After hearing A's previous condemnation of the divinity schools it seems highly doubtful that A truly believes that the school divines understand all civil and moral philosophy. An exception would be Hobbes's science of politics, or the "science of just and unjust" previously mentioned by A in dialogues 1 and 2. According to A, natural science was "removed from Oxford and Cambridge to Gresham College in London . . . to be learned out of their gazettes," which implies that natural science was a controversial subject within traditional curricula.<sup>88</sup> While this seems to be more of an exaggeration than a fact, the major universities did take measures to limit the influence of Hobbes's political science around the time he wrote *Behemoth*.<sup>89</sup> True to his character, A still maintains that the universities and their

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. Unlike the colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, Gresham College has no official curriculum. Its mission, in Hobbes's time and now, is to provide "[free public lectures](#) by its [eight professors](#)" and "does not award degrees or teach courses." Taken from <http://www.gresham.ac.uk/>. This makes Gresham College more akin to an adult public education institution than a college in the typical sense.

<sup>89</sup> Perhaps the most famous example is the expulsion of Cambridge Fellow and self-proclaimed "Hobbist" Daniel Scargill in 1669, which Jon Parkin calls "a particularly interesting episode, and not only because it reveals the existence of sympathy for Hobbes's views within the university. The Hobbism that Daniel Scargill would be made to confess had less to do with his genuinely Hobbesian sympathies than it did with

authoritative opinions caused the problems that led to civil war. But A's argument here in dialogue three is a lot less coherent and factual than his earlier statements; and A concedes that his outburst is "gone from our subject" of "where philosophy and the humane sciences" can be learned.<sup>90</sup> B no longer feels it is necessary to continue the discussion about the universities, and reminds A that "we are indeed gone from the greater business of the kingdom,"<sup>91</sup> postponing talk about the universities until dialogue four.

It is important to notice B's increasing skepticism about the political value of the universities. He equates the university with a hospital: a place where a man can "correct his vices" in the same manner as the lame man can correct his gait.<sup>92</sup> Examined this way, the universities are not places that should be purged of those with bad character, as A would suggest. Rather, they are places where individuals with bad character can learn good personal habits but, beyond this pedagogical function, the universities have no impact on the affairs of the state. B believes that the real "business of the kingdom" is outside the academy, and by extension, outside of academic arguments.

### **Section 5: Science in *Behemoth's* Fourth Dialogue**

The word "science" appears two times at one specific point in dialogue four. When discussing the Rump Parliament's enactment of the fundamental laws of the

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wider anxieties about Hobbes's influence." See Jon Parkin's *Taming the Leviathan* (Cambridge: University Press, 2007), p. 245.

<sup>90</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 148.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

nation, A argues that it levied taxes to pay soldiers, quartered soldiers in private homes, and performed “many other actions, which if the King had done, they would have said had been done against the liberty and propriety of the subjects.”<sup>93</sup> B seems to mock the people for believing the Rump’s hypocrisy, calling the common people “silly things . . . to be cozened as they were so grossly!”<sup>94</sup> Why would Hobbes emphasize B’s response? We must remember what B stated in dialogue one: that anything the people learn from the past “will quickly be forgot, and then we shall be no wiser than we were.”<sup>95</sup> It seems that the excesses of the Rump not only mirror the excesses of Charles I, but if A is correct, the excesses of the Rump have the capacity to become worse than those in Charles I’s reign.<sup>96</sup> It validates B’s previous statement that the people will forget the lessons of history, allowing the conditions that create civil disturbance to manifest themselves anew.

Just as A responded to B’s cynical outlook in dialogue one, A responds to B’s accusation here in dialogue four. He first shows that the Rump and the people share a common level of wit, a similar notion of justice, and a similar hatred of monarchy.<sup>97</sup> A

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p. 39.

<sup>96</sup> “For the only fundamental law in every commonwealth is to obey the laws from time to time, which he shall make to whom the people have given the supreme power. How likely is then are they to uphold the fundamental laws, that had murdered him who was by themselves so often acknowledged for their lawful sovereign?” (ibid., p. 158).

<sup>97</sup> “The craftiest knaves of all the Rump were no wiser than the rest whom they cozened. For the most of them did believe that the same things which they imposed upon the generality, were just and reasonable; and especially the great haranguers, and such as pretended to learning For who can be a good subject to monarchy, whose principles are taken from the enemies of monarchy . . . who seldom speak of kings but as wolves and other ravenous beasts?” (ibid).

then shows how “a good natural wit” alone cannot teach individuals to obey a sovereign and he offers an alternative to natural wit. Only “a science . . . built upon clear principles . . . to be learned by deep and careful study . . . or from masters that have deeply studied it” can prevent history from repeating itself.<sup>98</sup> A then spends the remainder of the dialogue criticizing “the Presbyterian preachers, who, by a long practiced histrionic faculty, preached up the rebellion powerfully.”<sup>99</sup> B’s response is brief: he asks “to what end” the Presbyterian ministers preached in favor of the rebellion.<sup>100</sup> A explains that the end of the Presbyterians’ preaching was to bring forth a state governed by popular decree so that the clergy could govern, satisfy their longing for wealth, and use their “power to undo all men that admired not their wisdom.”<sup>101</sup> B’s characterization of the people as “silly things” is countered by A, who argues that the reason the people could not see this ulterior motive was not due to “want of wit, but want of the science of justice.”<sup>102</sup> A then issues B a challenge: to persuade him that good wit is sufficient to protect an individual from the ambitions of the crafty. B, however, does not pick up the challenge immediately, but asks A to return “to the proceedings of the Rump.”<sup>103</sup>

Why does B not pick up A’s challenge that natural wit is sufficient to make individuals understand why “one person has a right to govern, and the rest an obligation

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

to obey?”<sup>104</sup> One of the advantages B has is that he already knows the sequence of events A must retell, because it is part of the historical record. The reason B urges A to get back to the historical record is because B knows the facts will eventually prove him right, for B knows that the Rump will eventually submit to Oliver Cromwell. A starts with the Rump’s inability to raise an army to counter the Scottish rebellion of 1649. He then describes how Cromwell was made a doctor of the civil law at Oxford before taking possession of Ireland. After General Fairfax “refused to fight against the [Presbyterian] brethren in Scotland,” Oliver Cromwell became the “general of all the forces in England and Ireland.”<sup>105</sup> When hostilities broke out between England and the Dutch, Cromwell became even more indispensable. In 1653, he was “but one step to the end of his ambition, and that was to set his foot upon the neck of this Long Parliament.”<sup>106</sup> Earning the loyalty of the people, Cromwell “went to the Parliament House, and dissolved them, turning them out, and locked up the doors. And for this action he was more applauded by the people than for any of the victories in the war, and the Parliament men as much scorned and derided.”<sup>107</sup> Understanding the need for the legitimacy that comes from Parliament, Cromwell “called a Parliament, and gave it the supreme power, with the condition that they should give it to him.”<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 166.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

Eventually, B brings up the issue of whether wit can teach individuals whom to obey, and why they should do so. Specifically, B argues that “this Parliament, which has seen how Cromwell had handled the two former, the long one and the short one, had surely learned the wit to behave themselves better to him than those had done,” to which A replies “yes, especially now that Cromwell in his speech . . . told them . . . that every member of the House, before they sat, must take a recognition of his power in diverse points.”<sup>109</sup> From this passage it seems that people do not need the science of justice to understand obedience. Absolute power alone is sufficient to compel obedience if for no other reason than that one’s life depends upon it. Science may teach individuals why it is natural or advantageous to obey an absolute sovereign, but individuals do not necessarily need science to learn whom to obey and why it is necessary to do so. In order to determine whether good wit is enough to shield individuals from the ambitions of the crafty, we have to determine if the Rump possessed “good wit” to begin with. The best we can say is that if the individuals that comprised the Rump had good wits before the rise of Cromwell, they certainly had better wits afterward, but it was not science that informed them. Witnessing the downfall of the Parliament orchestrated by the craftiest figure in the narrative was enough to teach the Parliamentarians whom to obey, and perhaps more importantly, the power of craft. That is why B stated that the Parliamentarians “learned the wit” to obey, rather than simply possessed the wit.

Science is not brought up in the remainder of *Behemoth’s* text. As we examine how science is used throughout the text, several interesting patterns arise. A seems to bring up science right after B points out the failings of human beings to be moral. In

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 185.

dialogue one, B argued that people never consider anything other than their self-interest and the advice given to them by their superiors. Also, B argued that civil society is prone to making the same mistakes again, since it tends to forget the hard lessons civil unrest teaches them. A responds by offering science as a solution to the problem of forgetfulness, but admits that such a solution requires significant changes to the educational system. In dialogue two, B discusses the House of Lords' folly to believe that their power is not tied to the king's power. A counters by reminding B that both the House of Lords and the House of Commons lack the science of equity and justice. Later in dialogue two, B argues that the king Ergamenes acted with cruelty toward political rivals that seemed harmless. A responds by pointing out how harmful doctrines can be, not only because they promote civil disturbance, but they also prevent the science necessary to peace from being taught. In dialogue three, B argues that the university reform of 1649 was just an example of pious showmanship that is counterproductive to the university's end of bringing people to virtue. A counters by stating that the universities cannot teach virtue, because they have purged science from their curricula. Finally, in dialogue four, B mocks the people for being lulled into believing that the Rump could exercise its prerogatives better than the late monarchy of Charles I. A counters by claiming that the reason the people were so deceived was due to a lack of the science of justice.

When A brings up the subject of science, B always brings A back to the historical record. He is willing to entertain A's belief in the power of science for a time, but as *Behemoth* progresses, B's tolerance for A decreases. In dialogue one, B asks A to

describe again why the Pope set up the universities in the first place. In dialogue two, B asks A to turn his attention away from university reform, and back to Parliament. The second place where A brings up science in dialogue two is an exception to this rule, but A seems to bring himself back to the historical record without being prompted by B. In dialogue three, B asks A to turn his attention back to “the greater business of the kingdom” after a digression into the reasons moral science is not taught in the universities. This pattern is reaffirmed in dialogue four when B asks A to return to the proceedings of the Rump. It would seem by these examples that B is not the type of person who is convinced by A’s belief in the power of science to heal the ills of the commonwealth. After all, B knows very well that the civil war ended, and that science played no role in bringing the civil war to its conclusion. B does not need to argue with A about the utility of science to heal the ills of the commonwealth. Instead, B only needs A to finish the historical narrative, which provides a case where peace was found without the help of science. In dialogue four, B gets A to admit that the people eventually learned whom to obey, and more importantly, how vulnerable the commonwealth actually was to personal ambition.

It is difficult to conclude that Hobbes definitively rejected his previous scientific model as put forth in *The Elements of Law*, *De Cive*, and *Leviathan*. Hobbes devoted nearly his entire life creating and promoting a new way to understand politics: one that he vigorously defended throughout his career. Yet was this science actually necessary in the way Hobbes claimed? That is to say, if science was not responsible for creating the peace, there has to be some other means by which the people could find peace or, more



specifically, some other means by which the people may place those tendencies that promote civil conflict in check. A is convinced that the want of a true science of justice is what caused the people to rebel, since they did not know whom to follow. B does not see the civil war as a problem of doctrine as much as it is a problem of human nature. Specifically, human beings seldom follow anything past their self-interest, and they fail to learn the necessary lessons that will prevent calamity in the future. In the course of the narrative, we learn that the universities have always promoted the interests of those who attend the universities, and a science that does not promote the political power of the educated will never find a home in the curriculum. Even if some regime like the Rump purges the universities of everybody not favorable to the ruling regime's interest, this itself is no guarantee that the regime will be stable. All it takes for a regime to fall is a particularly crafty politician like Oliver Cromwell: a man who was able to gain both academic and military honors.

While B acknowledges that a science of justice based upon definite and sure principles can be useful, science takes a back seat to the grim reality that human beings will strive for power: an attitude that is certainly very Hobbesian. However, it is a mistake to think that Hobbes intended simply to *describe* the disposition of human beings. The ultimate goal of his science was to *change* the disposition of human beings by giving a clear explanation of why it is in their interest to place the relentless pursuit of power in check. What *Behemoth* shows us is that this might not be possible: that there are limits to what science can do both politically and psychologically. Fortunately, however, science might not be necessary. *Behemoth* also shows us how people may learn

their duty by seeing the consequences of not upholding it, with the clearest example being Oliver Cromwell's acquisition of the very same absolute power that the Parliamentarians sought to eliminate through the execution of Charles I. What made the people of England recognize the folly of the rebellion was not science, but bearing witness to Cromwell's regime, one that possessed all of the power of Charles I's regime, but without the attendant duty of ensuring *salus populi*, or the safety and well-being of the people.<sup>110</sup>

As stated in the first chapter of this study, scholars have assumed that A's argument holds up throughout *Behemoth* under the assumption that A represents the authoritative Hobbes. According to this view, *Behemoth* is another argument in favor of Hobbes's previous conception of science. While it may be the case that A promotes science as the only way to solve the problems of the commonwealth, A is eventually forced to concede that the rebellious faction "learned the wit" to behave better without understanding the science of justice. This would seem to indicate that Hobbes was open to the possibility that there may be other avenues to understanding obligation than science alone. This would also explain why Hobbes would write in *Behemoth*'s Epistle Dedicatory: "there can be nothing more instructive towards loyalty and justice than will be the memory, while it lasts," of the English Civil War.<sup>111</sup> While it might well be the case that science offers a clearer understanding of the need for loyalty and justice, given the fact that science is not readily available, the memory may be all the majority of

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<sup>110</sup> *Behemoth*, "B. Did Cromwell come in upon the only title of *salus populi*? A. No. For this is a title that very few men understand" p. 181.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. liii.

people will have to guide them on the proper political course. In this sense, the memory of the events between 1640 and 1660 might not be more instructive in terms of *clarity*, but definitely more instructive in terms of *availability*, at least in terms of Hobbes's audience in the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Specifically, *Behemoth* points out the limitations of science to create change, and the capacity for human beings to learn from mistakes. However, if the Restoration was not brought about by his science of politics, how was peace brought about? This will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV  
THE PROBLEM OF THE UNEXPLAINED RESTORATION

**Section 1: The Limitations of Hobbes's Science**

While *Behemoth* is a chronicle about civil war, it is also a chronicle about peace. This becomes clear when we compare *Behemoth's* and *Leviathan's* conclusions. Hobbes chooses to end his discourse on commonwealth with a section entitled “The Kingdome of Darknesse,” an analogy for a commonwealth governed using “dark, and erroneous Doctrines.”<sup>1</sup> In contrast, Hobbes's history of the English Civil War ends with the newly-elected Parliament having “done all that a Parliament can do for the security of our peace” by ushering in the reign of Charles II and giving him “the right of the militia in virtue of the sovereignty . . . without any particular act of Parliament directly to that purpose.”<sup>2</sup> What *Behemoth's* character A describes here is the Militia Act of 1661, which A characterizes as “more instructive to the people, than any arguments drawn from the title of sovereign.”<sup>3</sup> *Behemoth*—unlike *Leviathan*—has a happy conclusion. Yet this happy conclusion also presents new challenges to Hobbes's political science. Specifically, was the Restoration something that Hobbes's political science could predict?

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<sup>1</sup> *Leviathan*, IV.44.628.

<sup>2</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 204.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Hobbes was in a much different position when writing *Leviathan* than he was when writing *Behemoth*. Published in 1651, *Leviathan* was a product of “the disorders of the present time,” when the ultimate outcome of the civil war was unknown.<sup>4</sup> By 1668, the war had been over for eight years, allowing Hobbes to see the entirety of the struggle from beginning to end. He was in a much better position to see how peace could be achieved in 1668, as he witnessed it unfold in a way that was not available to him in the midst of the civil war. Commentators have often assumed that Hobbes wrote *Behemoth* as either an addendum or a precursor to *Leviathan*, yet the most unexamined aspect of *Behemoth* is that it provides an implicit challenge to Hobbes’s previous political science. Specifically, *Behemoth* offers a convincing case that peace can be achieved without Hobbes’s political science, and not because of it.

*Leviathan*’s readers have often been puzzled at Hobbes’s lack of evidence for his more radical assertions. The most obvious example is Hobbes’s vision of the state of nature, a theory that relies on assertion more than proof. Strauss observed that Hobbes “almost apologized for employing” the state of nature,<sup>5</sup> because Hobbes could marshal no convincing evidence that such a state was indeed the general condition of human beings before the commonwealth. The examples Hobbes provides are, by any standard, unsatisfactory. He points to examples among native Americans in “many places” as proof that his theory of the state of nature is valid, and offers a thought experiment to his

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<sup>4</sup> *Leviathan*, Review and Conclusion, p. 728

<sup>5</sup> See Strauss (1953), p. 184.

skeptical readers “who desire perhaps to have the same confirmed by experience.”<sup>6</sup> Yet Hobbes knew that these arguments were not sufficient in themselves to establish the state of nature as fact.<sup>7</sup> At best, the state of nature would only apply to certain—but not all—pre-political societies, and the argument that locking chests and doors is proof of a general state of hostility among individuals denies the much more realistic possibility that thieves are just common enough for property owners to exhibit a degree of prudence.

The argument for the state of nature in *De Cive* is even less persuasive, as Hobbes asks his readers to “consider men as if but even now sprung out of the earth, and suddainly (like Mushromes) come to full maturity without all kind of engagement to each other.”<sup>8</sup> For Victoria Silver, the lack of anecdotal or empirical evidence to support *Leviathan*’s claims was not a problem for Hobbes when writing it, as “self-evidence in that work is first and foremost an aspect of his own verbal performance, and only secondarily of the reader’s intellectual consent.”<sup>9</sup> In other words, Hobbes was more concerned with *Leviathan*’s internal cohesion than he was with testing or verifying his theory. The examples for the state of nature are designed to clarify the general framework Hobbes constructed, and are not designed to describe “what actually happened in fact, in history.”<sup>10</sup> The state of nature is true for Hobbes because it follows

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<sup>6</sup> Taken from *Leviathan* I.13.87 and I.13.86, respectively.

<sup>7</sup> By Hobbes’s own admission, “there had never been any time, wherein particular men were in a condition of warre one against another” (*Leviathan*, I.13.187).

<sup>8</sup> *De Cive*, VII.1.117.

<sup>9</sup> Silver (1988), p. 352.

<sup>10</sup> Danford (1978), pp. 37-38.

from the preceding premises. Likewise, the concept of the state of nature and the accompanying “warre of every man against every man” was a natural antecedent to Hobbes’s greater theory of the commonwealth, for it explains “The Passions that encline men to Peace,” such as the “Feare of Death.”<sup>11</sup> Despite these epistemological issues, *Leviathan* still qualifies as a science insofar as it presents a logical argument, beginning “with the Definitions of Words,” proceeding “by Connexion of the same into generall Affirmations.”<sup>12</sup>

Hobbes’s *Leviathan* produces a streamlined model of human nature and government. In the words of Gabrielle Slomp, “the state of nature can be analyzed as a thought experiment,”<sup>13</sup> or as a convenient starting point for a model of political decision-making similar to the game theories proposed by economists in recent decades. Not surprisingly, several scholars have used game theory to illustrate Hobbes’s theory, most notably Gauthier, Hampton, and Slomp.<sup>14</sup> This is a natural progression, as both Hobbes’s science and game theory use reified models to explain political behavior. There are dangers in using reified models to explain real events, as they might be so abstracted from reality, they inaccurately depict whatever phenomena the models try to explain. Brian Martin explains the problem of modeling as a problem of simplification. He claims that “in any process of mathematical modeling, simplification is a necessity. The

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<sup>11</sup> *Leviathan*, I.13.188.

<sup>12</sup> *Leviathan*, I.7.131.

<sup>13</sup> Slomp (2000), p. 122.

<sup>14</sup> See David Gauthier’s *The Logic of Leviathan* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969) and Jean Hampton’s *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition* (1986) for additional examples of how scholars use game theory to understand Hobbes’s theory of contract.

important point is that there are innumerable ways in which a situation can be simplified, depending on which features are to be emphasized and which are to be ignored. Values enter through the decision to make a particular set of simplifications and to build a mathematical formalism based upon these simplifications. So in simplifying a situation, one inevitably introduces a bias; the question is, *which* bias?"<sup>15</sup> Models are designed to simplify a given situation in order to understand the underlying relationship between the critical factors. In terms of natural science, this can be rather useful in ascertaining the processes behind motion, matter, and energy. However, human action is far more complex and nuanced. Inevitably, scientists can only model the most important features of human action, or model the particular human activity that is most useful or interesting. The danger is that models of human action may become so simplified that the model starts to resemble a caricature of human activity rather than an accurate representation of human activity. This was the case with game theory in its earliest and most simplistic forms (such as the prisoner's dilemma), as they proved inadequate to explain most forms of decision-making where one or both parties were operating from incomplete information concerning the outcomes.<sup>16</sup> Simple game theory also proved inadequate when examining human motivations for choices, as it is unable to "consider someone who is to make a choice in which he has no personal selfish stake (or is prepared to

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<sup>15</sup> See Martin's "The Selective Usefulness of Game Theory," *Social Studies of Science*, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 92.

<sup>16</sup> See John Harsanyi's "Games with Incomplete Information Played by 'Bayesian' Players, Part I," *Management Science*, Vol. 14, No. 3 Theory Series, (November, 1967), pp. 159-182. "In our own view it has been a major analytical deficiency of existing game theory that it has been almost completely restricted to C-games [games where the players have complete information], in spite of the fact that in many real-life economic, political, military, and other social situations the participants often lack full information about some important aspects of the 'game' they are playing" (p. 163).



renounce any personal stake) who says that his only interest is in making the ‘right’ choice—a good moral or ethical choice.”<sup>17</sup>

As a result of such criticisms, game theory has grown from a simple and elegant set of concepts to a highly complex body of theory. However, such complexity comes at a cost, as the game theory in the twenty-first century loses some of the elegance that made it an attractive proposition in the twentieth century. Variations on the basic model include *G*-games (games with perfect player information), *I*-games (games with imperfect player information), single contest games, iterative contest games, normative game theory, behavioral game theory, evolutionary game theory, and derivative theories such as drama theory.<sup>18</sup> Rather than providing a simple, universal framework for human decision-making, game theory has become as nuanced and particular as the human decision-makers it attempts to model. If a model is too simple, it fails to fit the actual phenomena it attempts to understand. If a model is too complex, it ceases to be a scientific model, and becomes a non-generalizable description of the actual phenomenon.

How does one test or verify whether a model effectively represents the modeled phenomenon? In the social sciences, quantitative empirical testing seems to be the method of choice for verifying whether a model is a useful representation. Sociologist Trond Peterson, who is skeptical of game theory’s application in the social sciences, points to the methodological problems associated with game theory. He claims that while

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<sup>17</sup> See Thomas Shelling’s “Game Theory and the Study of Ethical Systems,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (March, 1968), p. 42.

<sup>18</sup> For a summary of these various versions of game theory, see Raymond Dacey and Lisa Carlson’s “The Normative, Behavioral, and Prescriptive Problems of Game Theory in International Relations,” *Mershon International Studies Review*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (April 1996), pp. 161-170.

“GT [game theory] holds considerable potential for sociology, I believe it will not diffuse very quickly, mainly because the dominant form of theoretical reasoning in sociology, at least in the United States, is middle-range theory coupled with empirical investigations. This is theorizing with a limited scope, with empirical implications that can be confronted with data, with the proponent of the theory being the one who confronts the data.”<sup>19</sup> To be fair, some game theorists have been successful in providing empirical evidence for game theoretic concepts through experimental designs using computer simulations.<sup>20</sup> However, game theory is far more conducive to empirical testing than is the theory advanced in *Leviathan*. Hobbes’s science is far from a “middle-range” theory, as Hobbes wanted to create a comprehensive theory of commonwealth arising out of a comprehensive account of human nature. The language of game theory makes it easy to operationalize for empirical testing, as it lends itself naturally to quantifiable proportions of benefit or penalty. Hobbes, however, did not speak in the language of quantifiable proportions, even when it seemed advantageous for him to do so, as in the case of his geometrical dispute with M. Renè-François de Sluse.<sup>21</sup> Rather, Hobbes’s science is necessarily nominal, as it is a science of how words are used in political discourse. While the science is causal insofar as the conclusions follow necessarily from the preceding

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<sup>19</sup> See Peterson’s “On the Promise of Game Theory in Sociology,” *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (July, 1994), p. 501.

<sup>20</sup> Perhaps the most famous study of this type in political science was Robert Axelrod’s *Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

<sup>21</sup> Finding error with M. de Sluse, Hobbes conveys, “how inadequate numbers are for confirming or refuting a geometrical demonstration.” See Letter 161 in *The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes* (1994), p. 583.

elements, Hobbes “begins with the Definitions of Words,”<sup>22</sup> which are typically considered more value-laden than the variables used in game theory. Hobbes hoped that by removing ambiguity from the definitions of words, a more accurate depiction of the underlying political forces that cause civil war and peace could be better understood. However, Hobbes only provides the reader with anecdotes and thought experiments to test *Leviathan’s* theory, relying more on the elegance of the theory to convince the skeptical reader.

The best proof of *Leviathan’s* applicability to real politics would come after the English Civil War ran its course in the Restoration monarchy of Charles II. Here was a real transition from civil instability to stability that everybody within the English Commonwealth experienced, providing a natural reference point for understanding the cause of civil war, and perhaps more importantly, the cause of peace. This raises an important question that must have been on Hobbes’s mind when writing *Behemoth*: do the events between 1640 and 1660 prove that Hobbes’s *Leviathan* is an accurate depiction of the cause of war and the cause of peace?

## **Section 2: *Behemoth’s* Solution to Civil War**

Hobbes scholars will point to several themes explored in *Behemoth* that seem to verify *Leviathan’s* model about the cause of civil war. In his introduction to the second edition of *Behemoth*, Goldsmith claims that “explaining the rebellion did not require a

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<sup>22</sup> *Leviathan*, I.7.131.

new theory; it only required that Hobbes use his old one to explain the phenomena.”<sup>23</sup>

Specifically, ambitious elites from both the clergy and the academy were responsible for the English Civil War, an argument that mirrors similar arguments in the treatises.<sup>24</sup> For Kraynak, *Behemoth* seems to mirror Hobbes’s earlier conclusions about the danger of competing doctrines within the university system.<sup>25</sup> Both ambition and divisive doctrine are prominent themes throughout Hobbes’s work in terms of the causes of civil discord. However, Hobbes’s political theory of the commonwealth explains more than the causes of civil discord. It also explains how civil discord can be eliminated.

*Leviathan* is a book about peace as well as war. The entire second part of *Leviathan* is devoted to determining which actions cause peace, as opposed to actions that are not conducive to peace. *Behemoth* is also a book about peace, but describes an actual peace. Several discrepancies become apparent when we compare Hobbes’s thoughts about how peace can be achieved with the facts of the Restoration. Though the English Civil War would carry on for approximately twenty years, the war ended. This alone is not problematic for *Leviathan*’s theory, but when we consider *how* the war ended, we find that *Leviathan* has a difficult time making sense of the peace. When we examine *Behemoth*, we find that the simple answer to the question of how the Restoration came to be is that the Long Parliament originally responsible for the constitutional crisis was

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<sup>23</sup> *Behemoth*, p. xiv.

<sup>24</sup> Specifically, *Leviathan* chapter 29, *De Cive* chapter XII, and in *The Elements of Law* part II, chapter 8.

<sup>25</sup> See Kraynak’s *History and Modernity in the Thought of Thomas Hobbes* (1990). “In proposing to reform the universities, Hobbes seeks to rid contemporary civil society of the religious, political, and legal doctrines that inspired the recent civil war and to establish the authority of Charles II on a lasting foundation” (p. 62).

unable to win reelection. As A puts it, “few of this Long Parliament (the country having felt the smart of their former service) could get themselves chosen again.”<sup>26</sup> It would seem that the same people who “were corrupted generally”<sup>27</sup> twenty years before learned something from the experience, but what did they learn, and from where?

From all indications, the universities were still corrupt, the ministers were still preaching seditious doctrines, and nothing in *Behemoth* suggests that the people were better educated at the end of the English Civil War than they were previously.

Throughout *Behemoth*, the character A readily admits that there is no system yet in place for the English people to learn the “science of just and unjust.”<sup>28</sup> Instead, England operated under a university system dominated by school divinity and ancient philosophy: the sort of “doctrinal politics” Hobbes’s science attempted to replace.<sup>29</sup> It seems that “the late miseries” really “have made men wiser,”<sup>30</sup> but this wisdom was not taught as a science. Rather, the people voted for new representatives based upon their unaided opinion about the Long Parliament’s service.

*Behemoth*’s characters allude to three reasons why the people abandoned the Long Parliament. First, the Long Parliament in the waning years of English Civil War was no longer accountable to the people. Popularly referred to as the “Rump,” the

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<sup>26</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 203.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39, 70, 96, 147, 158. The passage on 96 only appears in the St. John’s manuscript, and not in the *English Works*.

<sup>29</sup> Kraynak (1990), p. 98.

<sup>30</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 39.

Parliament had already purged itself of several members who refused to find Charles I guilty of treason.<sup>31</sup> Because no monarch was available to dismiss Parliament, the Rump Parliament continued indefinitely without elections throughout the officers' rebellion. The longer the Rump Parliament stayed in power, the more alienated the original supporters of popular government became. This discontent would coalesce into the "Free Parliament" movement in the waning days of the English Civil War.<sup>32</sup>

Second, A cites overbearing taxes as a cause of discontent with the Rump Parliament, especially in the large cities. A cites a "100,000*l*" a month tax on London that caused considerable disagreement with the Rump, causing the Rump to send General Lambert "to break down the city gates and their portcullises, and to imprison certain obstinate citizens."<sup>33</sup> As a result, the Rump became increasingly dependent on a standing army to keep the peace, requiring further taxation in order to pay for it.

The need for an army illustrates a third reason for the Rump Parliament's failure. Despite its power over the purse, Parliament was unable to fulfill its duty of securing *salus populi*. Instead, a council of officers was convened to carry out the most important function of government.<sup>34</sup> Not only was the Rump increasingly unaccountable to the people's interests, but it was becoming apparent to the general population that it was altogether unnecessary. Character B states the predicament of the Rump Parliament perfectly, "for they that keep an army, and cannot master it, must be subject to it as much

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<sup>31</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 155.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198.

as he that keeps a lion in his house.”<sup>35</sup> Perhaps the best example of B’s observation is his characterization of Lord Monck’s *coup d’état* as “the greatest stratagem extant in history.”<sup>36</sup>

This praise would seem to indicate that B approved of Lord Monck’s actions to compel the Long Parliament into obedience, but what B actually means is somewhat puzzling. The problem with accepting B’s praise of Lord Monck’s actions is that it seems to run counter to B’s previous statements. For example, B implies in dialogue two that a victorious general should “either take the government upon himself, or to place it where he himself thinks good,”<sup>37</sup> but General Monck did neither. One biographer argued that his speech to the Rump Parliament after his capture of London “did not satisfy anybody,” for he made no statement that supported the Royalist cause, the Rump’s cause, the cause of the secluded members, or the Free Parliamentarians.<sup>38</sup> Rather than take power, Lord Monck not only ceded power, but also ceded in favor of an unpopular institution that had already failed. Moreover, B implies that if a victor does not accept sovereignty, the victor “will be thought a fool; and if he do, he shall be sure to have the envy of his subordinate commanders who will look for a share in the present government, or in succession to it.”<sup>39</sup> Since Lord Monck neither accepted sovereignty, nor delegated power or honors to his subordinates, one would think that B would characterize him as

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 204.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>38</sup> See Maurice Ashley’s *General Monck* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977), p. 195.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

foolish and certainly not worthy of having performed “the greatest stratagem extant in history.” Statements such as this only underscore the complicated nature of the Restoration in Hobbes’s writings. Hobbes praises the Restoration, but his science cannot fully explain how the Restoration could occur.

*Leviathan* cannot account for the type of altruism General Monck displays. By contrast, Hobbes’s theory can explain the actions of the other principal actors in the civil war as glory-seekers, with Oliver Cromwell fitting most of the descriptions in chapter 13 of *Leviathan*.<sup>40</sup> Yet there is no indication from Hobbes or any of the secondary accounts that General Monck was an ambitious man.<sup>41</sup> While ultimately Lord Monck’s actions would restore the monarchy, there is no mechanism within Hobbes’s mechanical account that can explain why a figure with the sort of power and authority Monck possessed would willingly give up that power. Monck’s promise to protect the Long Parliament could not be considered a covenant, because there was no “right and force sufficient to compel performance”<sup>42</sup> on the Long Parliament’s part. Monck held the power of the sword: something that Parliament in all its forms was unable to master. Yet Monck does not fit the criteria of a conqueror, because he never intended to rule England, but to facilitate the rule of Parliament and later King Charles II.

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. *Leviathan*’s description of glory-seekers as invading “for trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other signe of undervalue” (I.13.185) with *Behemoth*’s depiction of Oliver Cromwell’s struggle with Parliament as a “game of cards” (p. 135).

<sup>41</sup> On the contrary, Clarendon describes a scenario early in Monck’s service to Charles I where “his lieutenant colonel was very desirous to give up the command again to him [Monck], and receive his orders,” but Monck “would by no means at the time take it, but chose to serve, as a volunteer, in the first rank, with a pike in his hand.” Taken from *Clarendon: Selections from The History of the Rebellion and The Life by Himself*. Ed. G. Huehns (London: Oxford, 1978), p. 360.

<sup>42</sup> *Leviathan*, I.14.196.



While Monck's actions may have ultimately facilitated peace and stability within the English Commonwealth, the means Monck used to achieve this peace do not coincide with what *Leviathan* identifies as peaceful conduct. Described by one contemporary biographer as "a veritable Machiavelli,"<sup>43</sup> Monck—like Cromwell before him—had a talent for playing factions against each other for a desired end. If anything, General Monck was a deceptive personality unwilling to enforce the claim of the Long Parliament he pledged to protect.<sup>44</sup> Secretly, Monck desired the restoration of Charles II, but did not openly advocate reestablishing the absolute monarchy. Monck could see that the Londoners viewed the Rump as an increasingly heavy-handed and despotic organization, and he suspected that if the Rump Parliament would become accountable again through the electoral process, there was a good chance Charles II would be installed as monarch.<sup>45</sup>

This sort of duplicitous politics is something Hobbes's scientific model cannot fully appreciate, except in a negative sense. Duplicity is tantamount to breaking *Leviathan's* third law of nature: "that men performe their covenants made."<sup>46</sup> If General Monck was loyal to the King, he was duplicitous by making a covenant to serve Parliament. If General Monck was loyal to Parliament, he was duplicitous by facilitating Parliament's dissolution. Nevertheless, neither A nor B castigate Monck for this

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<sup>43</sup> Ashley (1977), p. 198.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. "He told the Rumpers what his replies had been; that the English people were now about to have a parliament free from pressures, guarded by his own sword" (p. 195).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., pp. 197-198.

<sup>46</sup> *Leviathan*, I.15.201.

duplicity. On the contrary, B praises General Monck highly, and A says nothing that would indicate that Monck was a man of bad character.

Monck's speculation was not based upon any scientific understanding of human nature as much as it was based upon his own conjecture from experience. The outcome of free elections could very well install more Presbyterian factionalists rather than Royalists intent on restoring the monarchy. Monck hoped that his expectation would be borne out according to his observations. Yet for Hobbes, conjecture from experience "is an *error*: for the signs are but *conjectural*; and according as they have often or seldom failed, so their *assurance* is more or less; but *never full* and *evident*."<sup>47</sup> Monck may have selected the course that had the greatest probability of success, but certainly no guarantee of success. It would appear that B's "greatest stratagem" was, by Hobbes's own standard, fortuitous rather than great. Despite the questionable methods by which General Monck brought peace to the commonwealth, Hobbes chose to end *Behemoth* praising Monck, and not Charles II, showing us that he wanted to draw attention to this humble, yet instrumental, figure in the Restoration. What could Hobbes be trying to accomplish here?

Given the facts of the Restoration, Hobbes may have reconsidered how commonwealths establish sovereignty. Traditionally, we have assumed that sovereignty can be established one of two ways: either through institution (contract) or through

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<sup>47</sup> Taken from *Tripes I: Human Nature* as found in *English Works IV* (London: John Bohn, 1840), pp. 17-18.

acquisition (conquest).<sup>48</sup> Using Goldsmith's account of sovereign claims, the Restoration cannot be considered "sovereignty by institution." The people and Monck did not restore the monarchy directly, but chose representatives in Parliament who then subsequently decided to restore Charles II's claim to the throne. Given the desire for free elections, it is a mistake to assume that the people voted for representatives in Parliament with the intention of giving up this freedom wholly over to a monarch's will, as was the case in Charles I's reign. Clarendon observed that the restored monarchy did not have the same autonomy or prerogative as the previous monarchy, because "the king was not yet master of his kingdom," even after the passage of the Militia Act.<sup>49</sup> Additionally, Charles II continued to quarrel with Parliament over matters of religious toleration until 1681, when Parliament was dismissed indefinitely over the Bills of Exclusion. Though primarily Royalist in composition, the Parliament viewed Charles II as a vehicle for serving Parliament's interests, which included measures to strengthen Episcopacy at the expense of Presbyterian and Catholic freedoms of conscience. As Clarendon observed, "very few" of the Royalists in Parliament "did not think themselves qualified to reform whatsoever was amiss in church or state, and to procure whatsoever supply the king would require."<sup>50</sup> The Presbyterian Long Parliament advanced Presbyterian interests at the expense of the whole kingdom, but the post-Restoration Parliament advanced Anglican interests at the expense of whole kingdom as well. While *Behemoth's* B admits

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<sup>48</sup> See Goldsmith's chapter "Hobbes on Law," taken from *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes*, Ed. Tom Sorell (Cambridge: University Press, 1996), pp. 279-280.

<sup>49</sup> See *Clarendon: Selections* (1978), p. 374.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 382-3.

the post-Restoration Parliament “has done all that a Parliament can do for the security” of the English Commonwealth, he also recommends that “preachers would take heed of instilling evil principles into their auditory.”<sup>51</sup> Since B does not refer to any preachers in particular, the “preachers” could refer to Anglican as well as Presbyterian preachers. Given the central role the Anglicans would play in the new Parliament between 1660 and 1668, it seems highly likely that Hobbes may have been giving a warning to politicians of his own time, rather than recalling earlier abuses by Parliament. Nevertheless, while B makes no mention of the post-Restoration Parliament in his chronology of sovereigns, England was still very much under Parliament’s control. Rather than absolute monarchy, the post-Restoration government resembled what A calls “mixarchy,” or divided sovereignty: an institutional arrangement favored by both Royalist and anti-Royalist members of Parliament.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, it is difficult to view the post-Restoration political system as instituting absolute sovereignty in any single institution.

While it is questionable whether the people actually chose Charles II to exercise complete sovereignty, the fact remains that the elections were called as a direct result of General Monck’s *coup d’état*. General Monck acquired a monopoly on the use of force in London, forcing elections, which subsequently created a change. This raises the

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<sup>51</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 204.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 116-7. Notice how A describes the faction as “men, whose pens the King [Charles I] most used in these controversies of law and politics” who “were such . . . as having been members of this Parliament, had declaimed against ship money and other extra-parliamentary taxes, as much as any; but when they saw the Parliament grow higher in their demands than they thought they would have done, went over to the King’s party.” It would seem that among the Royalists, monarchy and mixed government is not mutually exclusive. Cf. Royce MacGillivray’s (1970) article where he states, “the Royalists, like their opponents, were deeply devoted to Parliaments; and even a hint as to the desirability of the destruction of Parliament is very rare in their writings” (p. 197).

question of who was actually responsible for changing the regime. On the one hand, the people were empowered to make their own decisions. On the other hand, the people might not have had the opportunity to elect their representatives in Parliament, had Lord Monck not taken control of London. In this respect, the Restoration was brought about more by the point of a sword, rather than through any popular or Parliamentary consent.

Forcing a change of regime through force of arms is not necessarily a problem for Hobbes's conception of the rightful origins of sovereignty. As previously mentioned, Hobbes considered "sovereignty by acquisition" as another method by which a commonwealth can establish a rightful sovereign. However, we have to ask whether Lord Monck's *coup d'état* qualifies as the establishment of sovereignty through acquisition. To begin, Lord Monck did not take control of England directly. He let the Rump Parliament govern as it always had done until the secluded members could be readmitted and new elections could be called. Lord Monck would also cede control of his army to Charles II, who took no part in acquiring the regime that he would eventually control. As far as conquering sovereigns are concerned, neither Lord Monck nor Charles II really qualifies according to Hobbes's definition, as neither of them was willing to "destroy them [the people] if they refuse."<sup>53</sup> While peace was eventually reestablished, it is unclear from Hobbes's scientific model how the reestablished sovereign power came to be. If the Restoration monarchy was neither consented to nor acquired through conquest, how does Hobbes explain the peace brought about by the Restoration?

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<sup>53</sup> *Leviathan*, II.18.228.

### Section 3: Sovereignty by Strategy

*Behemoth* seems to allow for a third way in which sovereignty can be established: through “great strategy” or political maneuver. Hobbes does not discuss political maneuvering in his scientifically oriented works, probably because he was more concerned with the general dispositions and behaviors of sovereigns, delving into the specifics of particular sovereigns and notables only later in *Leviathan*. Using Lord Monck and Charlemagne as examples of great strategists, we can start to identify how Hobbes views leadership as a means to establish or reestablish sovereign authority.

First, only a great strategic personality can be responsible for creating a great strategy. Sovereignty through great strategy depends on the political skill of elites to a far greater extent than sovereignty by institution or acquisition. While sovereignty by institution relies upon an existing groundswell of public support, great strategists often have to build public support out of anarchy. While great strategists have the advantage in force of arms, they do not use force to acquire sole sovereignty over a regime. Rather, great strategists use compromise, public relations, and experience to bring order back to a commonwealth.

Second, only a commonwealth suffering from a constitutional crisis can be saved by a great strategy. By contrast, perfectly stable and healthy commonwealths can be changed through institutional reform or through acquisition. When we see the two examples of great strategy outlined in *Behemoth*, we find that both General Monck and Charlemagne were responding to the absence of sovereign power, restoring some measure of security in a climate of insecurity. The Rump Parliament could not control

the army and, by extension, could not enforce the laws without Lord Monck's help. Similarly, local bishops and Pope Leo III were spiritual leaders and unable to protect church holdings from the Lombards.<sup>54</sup> Like Lord Monck, Charlemagne was responding to a regime with an established government that was unable to carry out the duty of securing *salus populi*. In this respect, leaders who establish sovereignty through great strategy are similar to leaders who acquire sovereignty simply. The difference between great strategists and conquerors is that great strategists recognize the value of maintaining the established ruling institution while conquerors replace the previous ruling institution entirely.

This leads us to the third defining characteristic of sovereignty through great strategy: institutional division. While institutional division is a mark of bad or unhealthy regimes in Hobbes's *Leviathan*,<sup>55</sup> scholars have noticed that Hobbes praised collaborative government in *A Dialogue*.<sup>56</sup> Specifically, Parliament is necessary to express "the assent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal,"<sup>57</sup> implying that laws must pass through Parliament's litmus test, rather than through the monarch's litmus test. Lord Monck could have simply removed the Rump Parliament and installed Charles II by force, as he had a monopoly over the legitimate use of force. Instead, he used his power to manipulate Parliament into restoring the monarchy by its own volition. Monck

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<sup>54</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 12.

<sup>55</sup> *Leviathan*, II.29.368.

<sup>56</sup> See Joseph Cropsey's introduction to Hobbes's *A Dialogue*, p. 48. For a different interpretation of the value of Parliamentary oversight in Hobbes's later writings, see Okin (1982), pp. 49-75.

<sup>57</sup> *A Dialogue*, p. 167.

apparently knew that Parliament, for all its faults, was an institution that held tremendous symbolic and actual importance to a significant portion of the English people. To abolish Parliament completely, or to leave it utterly disempowered, would cause more discord than peace. A better option would be to maintain Parliament's authority and symbolic importance in order to legitimize the King in some manner, which is exactly what A claimed happened when the Parliament bestowed "the right of the militia in virtue of the sovereignty without dispute . . . without either of his Houses of Parliament."<sup>58</sup> A does not underestimate the importance of this gesture, claiming that the Militia Act was "more instructive to the people, than any arguments drawn from the title of sovereign, and consequently fitter to disarm the ambition of all seditious haranguers for the time to come."<sup>59</sup> Hobbes does not seem concerned with whether Parliament had the right to bestow anything upon the monarch, nor does he seem overly concerned that the sovereign decides the powers of Parliament, and not vice-versa.<sup>60</sup> Instead, Hobbes views the actions of Parliament as more instructive than any argument for the king's legitimacy, including perhaps his own.

Similarly, Charlemagne removed the Lombards from the church lands in Italy, only to give them back to the Church to govern.<sup>61</sup> Yet Charlemagne received something in exchange for his deference to the prevailing religious authorities: the "gift of the empire," or the right to rule as the Holy Roman Emperor bestowed upon him by Pope

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<sup>58</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 204.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Leviathan*, II.22.275.

<sup>61</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 12.



Leo III.<sup>62</sup> While the question arises whether any religious authority ultimately has the right or power to bestow divine legitimacy upon a sovereign, in the case of Charlemagne, Hobbes seems less concerned with the legitimacy of Pope Leo III's coronation than he was with the practical effect of such a gesture. While "the empire was understood to be given him [Charlemagne], on the condition to be directed by the Pope," the coronation solidified support amongst the people of Charlemagne's empire. This consolidation of temporal power was based less on any scientific argument than on shrewd political maneuvering. As A states, "when the Pope invested him with the regal ornaments, the people all cried out *Deus dat*, that is to say, *it is God that gives it*; and the Emperor was contented so to take it."<sup>63</sup> Gestures of symbolic value designed to placate the needs of disparate factions seem to play a large role in how great strategists bring order into the commonwealth.

To be fair, the coronation of Charlemagne by Pope Leo III did nothing to consolidate temporal and spiritual authority in one sovereign, and this would have severe consequences over half a millennium later. According to A, Charlemagne was responsible for erecting the divinity schools that would produce the seditious doctrines responsible for creating public tumult against Charles I.<sup>64</sup> For a time, however, peace and authority returned to Europe. Since great strategy requires an unusually capable personality such as Lord Monck, the longevity of sovereignty through great strategy

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

seems to depend on the continual influence of the strategy's author, both in life and after the author's death. Perhaps this is why A offers up a prayer at the end of *Behemoth*, hoping that the Restoration monarchy "have as often as there shall be need" of a general like Monck.<sup>65</sup> By contrast, Hobbes's scientific solution aims at an "immortal peace" that is not dependent on the presence of leaders with political skill.<sup>66</sup> We have to wonder whether any regimes, even those that follow Hobbes's scientific model of absolute sovereignty, can constitute an immortal peace. The closest historical example Hobbes examines in *Behemoth* was the Roman Empire under Constantine,<sup>67</sup> but even this regime was unable to protect Rome in succeeding years. Given the circumstances surrounding the Restoration, Hobbes may have realized that peace is often the result of actions that are unexplained or not sufficiently examined by his previous account of human nature. Consequently, Hobbes needed to identify great strategies that seem counterintuitive to what his science would ordinarily predict.

We must remember that Hobbes's science in *The Elements of Law*, *De Cive*, and *Leviathan* reduces human behavior to its most basic and generalizable characteristics. In this respect, Hobbes's science is the precursor to game theory, and other general models of political behavior. Yet if this emphasis on the general tendencies within political behavior has a weakness, it is that reductive models cannot easily model the behavior of exceptional cases in exceptional circumstances. Great strategy is a function of

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 204.

<sup>66</sup> See Hobbes's Epistle Dedicatory to *De Cive* in *De Cive*, p. 25.

<sup>67</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 10.

exceptional political skill, coupled with exceptional circumstances, creating peace despite conditions that favor continual war. *Behemoth's* ending seems to imply that the Restoration can only be explained by the application of political skill by the skillful: a notion that is never emphasized in Hobbes's science, but finds its expression most clearly in Hobbes's history.

## CHAPTER V

### MODELS OF SOVEREIGN POWER

#### Section 1: Hobbes's Use of Historical Examples

In the previous chapter, we saw how Hobbes used history to explain how the English commonwealth was able to create peace out of civil war. Lord Monck's great stratagem was the cause of the Restoration, which in itself shows the weakness of Hobbes's science. Specifically, the unique qualities of political leaders such as Monck go beyond Hobbes's generalizable theory of politics, and explain the Restoration in a way that Hobbes's science alone could not. Hobbes's decision to end *Behemoth* in praise of Lord Monck's great strategy alludes to a more fundamental lesson that Hobbes tries to teach us in his later works: the importance of political skill. He teaches us this lesson through specific examples of sovereigns in his later works, a practice that is almost entirely absent from Hobbes's writings until *Leviathan*.

From *The Elements of Law* (1628) through the first part of *Leviathan* (1650), Hobbes does not typically use historical sovereigns from England in the explanation of his political science.<sup>1</sup> Instead, Hobbes relies on the internal coherence of his argument to convince the reader. Hobbes does not use historical case studies in these earlier works because he believed he did not need historical examples to formulate his political science.

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<sup>1</sup> An exception would be the mention of Henry VII in *The Elements of Law* (II.8.169).

When we read Hobbes's writings on method from *De Corpore*, we can understand why he came to this conclusion. Hobbes separates knowledge into two basic types: knowledge from ratiocination and knowledge from experience.<sup>2</sup> True philosophy and science create knowledge through ratiocination, which includes both analytical reasoning and synthetic reasoning.<sup>3</sup> Analytical reasoning, or the resolute part of Hobbes famous resolute-compositive method, is the "knowledge of singular things."<sup>4</sup> It is the process of isolating and defining the singular elements of a complex phenomenon under investigation. For example, human nature taken in its entirety is simply too complicated to understand. However, the component motivations that cause human beings to act are much easier to define and comprehend. This is exactly what Hobbes does in his political treatises: he breaks down human nature and volition into their component elements, giving each element a simple, axiomatic definition. In *The Elements of Law*, Hobbes names human characteristics in terms of the presence of a given quality (positive) or the

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<sup>2</sup> "Knowledge from experience" here means nothing more than a way human beings make sense of their world. John Danford (1980) observes that Hobbes distinguishes between "two sorts of knowledge" in the *Elements of Law*, "of which the first consists in 'experience of fact'" (p. 107). The other "sort of knowledge, then, is science" (p. 109). However, Danford noticed that Hobbes "seems to consider only one of these real knowledge, and in one place even defines knowledge so as to exclude implicitly the sort he for the most part ignores anyway," (p. 110) which is the "experience of fact" found in the *Elements of Law*. Therefore, experience may not qualify as true "knowledge," at least when compared to the standards of truth and evidence located in Hobbes's science. However, Hobbes does seem to use the term "originall knowledge" to describe the kind of reckoning that comes from experience. For example, in *Leviathan's* chapter 46, Hobbes states "that originall knowledge called Experience, in which consisteth Prudence" which is "found as well in Brute Beasts, as in Man" is no part of philosophy, rightly understood (*Leviathan*, IV.46.362). It is in this latter sense of experience as "originall knowledge," which may not be genuine knowledge, that describes what "knowledge from experience" means.

<sup>3</sup> *De Corpore*, p. 65-66.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

absence, defect, or lack of a given quality (private).<sup>5</sup> In both *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive*, Hobbes further reduces the panoply of qualities that are either positive or private into “four kinds; bodily strength, experience, reason [and] passion.”<sup>6</sup> By examining human beings in terms of these specific qualities, one may understand what makes particular human beings act.

Ratiocination is not only capable of understanding singular things. Synthetic reasoning, or the compositive portion of the resolute-compositive method, is the “knowledge . . . of universals, and of their causes.”<sup>7</sup> Just as analytic reasoning is necessary to make complicated phenomena simple to understand, synthetic reasoning is necessary to make a particular theory about a particular example a comprehensive theory that encompasses all examples. Synthetic reasoning is the use of a true definition to understand definitions of greater complexity through the use of syllogisms. Hobbes uses the example of how a geometrician can discern points and lines from the more general conceptions of place and motion.<sup>8</sup> In this way, human beings can understand phenomena

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<sup>5</sup> “So that here be two sorts of names: one of things, in which we conceive something, or of the conceptions themselves, which are called positive; the other things wherein we conceive privation or defect, and those names are called private” *Elements of Law*, I.5.19.

<sup>6</sup> *De Cive*, I.1.41. Cf. *Elements of Law*, I.14.70.

<sup>7</sup> *De Corpore*, p. 70.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., “For example, he that has a true conception of *place*, cannot be ignorant of this definition, *place is that space which is possessed or filled adequately by some body*; and so, he that conceives *motion* alright, cannot but know that *motion is the privation of one place, and the acquisition of another*. In the next place, we have their generations or descriptions; as (for example) that *a line is made by the motion of a point, superficies by the motion of a line, and one motion by another motion, &c.* It remains, that we enquire what motion begets such and such effects; as, what motion makes a straight line, and what a circular; what motion thrusts, what draws, and by what way; what makes a thing which is seen or heard, to be seen or heard sometimes in one manner, sometimes in another. Now the method of this kind of enquiry, is *compositive*” p. 71.

that are unobservable or so complicated that they cannot be understood clearly in any other way.

The second source of knowledge Hobbes describes is the knowledge that comes from experience, but when we examine the relationship between ratiocination and experience, we discover that ratiocination requires experience. Just as Hobbes asks the readers of his *Leviathan* to “read thy selfe,”<sup>9</sup> the fundamental requirement for any scientific investigation is an effort to understand one’s own “phantasms of sense and imagination.”<sup>10</sup> In this respect, ratiocination for Hobbes is a way of understanding the world of sense and experience, a world that concerns itself with what he calls “the motions of the mind.”<sup>11</sup>

Hobbes also concedes that ratiocination is not necessarily required for human beings to learn something, particularly human nature. Principles of human nature are discovered “not only by ratiocination, but also by the experience of every man that takes the pains to observe those motions within himself.”<sup>12</sup> From this passage, we can surmise that human beings do not necessarily require ratiocination, as most of the truths contained in Hobbes’s philosophy “may be known to be so by any man’s experience, that will but examine his own mind.”<sup>13</sup> Passages such as these raise questions concerning the

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<sup>9</sup> *Leviathan*, introduction, p. 82.

<sup>10</sup> *De Corpore*, p. 66.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

necessity of science at all. If human beings need only to examine their own minds, what need is there to pursue Hobbes's scientific method?

Experience, from Hobbes's epistemological standpoint, is deeply flawed. While experience can lead a human being to truth, it can equally lead a human being into error and absurdity. This is because memory or experience is "unconstant and fading," as the perceptions of what the memory is or means are variable.<sup>14</sup> History is even more problematic, because it is not only memory, but also the memory of someone else who may be biased or misinformed. The preface to Hobbes's translation of Thucydides remarks upon the tendency of historians to go beyond the mere historical narrative, inserting commentary alongside the bare historical facts.<sup>15</sup> Due to its richness, history is more than an account of times past, but is also a window into the minds of both the author and the author's subjects. Hobbes considered Thucydides unique among the historians, because "he setteth his reader in the assemblies of the people and in the senate, at their debating; in the streets, at their seditions; and in the field, at their battles."<sup>16</sup> Part of the reason for this is Thucydides' technique of reproducing the speeches of the various historical figures that take part in the Peloponnesian War. Hobbes understood that that the speeches in Thucydides were not written as a verbatim account, but rather as a proxy

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>15</sup> "It is true, that there be many excellent and profitable histories written since [Thucydides]: and in some of them there be inserted very wise discourses, both of manners and policy. But being discourses inserted, and not of the contexture of the narration, they indeed commend the knowledge of the writer, but not of history itself: the nature of which is merely narrative. In others, there be subtle conjectures at the secret aims and inward cognitions of such that fall under their pen; which is also none of the least virtues in a history, where conjecture is thoroughly grounded, not forced to serve the purpose of the writer in adorning his style, or manifesting his subtlety in conjecturing. But these conjectures cannot often be certain, unless withal so evident, that the narration itself may be sufficient to suggest the same also to the reader" (p. vii). Taken from Molesworth's *English Works*, volume VIII (London: John Bohn, 1843).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.



account that “used the arguments that best might serve to the purpose which at any time was at hand.”<sup>17</sup> In other words, the characters who uttered the speeches were not necessarily responsible for uttering the speech in fact, but the characters stood as personifications of commonly held arguments of several people or a particular faction.

Hobbes did not consider this a failing of Thucydides, but rather, his strength.<sup>18</sup> Like all historians, Thucydides had to strike a balance between style and substance in order “to instruct and enable men, by knowledge of actions past, to bear themselves prudently in the present and providently towards the future.”<sup>19</sup> Like any work of art, a work of history depends upon the artistic tools available to the historian to explain the facts so that the reader understands not only the *thoughts* of people from the past, but also, the *feelings* of the people from those former times. This is what makes history persuasive, but this is also what makes history dangerous for Hobbes. He noticed that “for the greatest part, men came to the reading of history with an affection much like that of the people in Rome: who came to the spectacle of the gladiators with more delight to behold their blood, than their skill in fencing.”<sup>20</sup> Political science as Hobbes understood it is far less dangerous than the investigations found within history because science appeals to reason as opposed to passion.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 25, note 3.

<sup>18</sup> “He may from the narrations draw out lessons to himself, and of himself be able to trace the drifts and counsels of the actors to their seat. These virtues of my author did so take my affection, that they begat in me a desire to communicate him further: which was the first occasion that moved me to translate him” (ibid., p. viii).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. vii.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. ix.

<sup>21</sup> *Leviathan*, I.5.117-118.

Hobbes did not reject the use of history as an instructional medium, but he was suspicious of the tendency of history to resemble poetry rather than any serious attempt to explain the truth.<sup>22</sup> For Hobbes, the irony of historiography is that the very qualities that produce a history like Thucydides' are also the qualities that make history dangerous. By inviting the reader to experience the events of the past in a firsthand way, the ambitious generals of the past act as models to emulate. Although Thucydides' use of opposed speeches provides clarity concerning the debates of the past, he and other historians were so effective that readers would often be inspired to recreate the escapades so gloriously described in the historical record. That is why Hobbes later condemned history as an instructional medium, as often the readers would receive "a strong, and delightfull impression, of the great exploits of warre."<sup>23</sup>

Just as Hobbes condemns history as a means of instruction, he nevertheless uses history to convince *Leviathan's* readers. Typically, Hobbes uses biblical history to illustrate his theological assertions, a perfectly good use of history given Hobbes's concession that science cannot be used to understand theological concepts or revelation generally speaking.<sup>24</sup> What is far more interesting is Hobbes's use of history when he does not have to use it—specifically with respect to his theory of the state and

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<sup>22</sup> Consider what Strauss wrote in *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* (1952), claiming that Hobbes intended history "to serve as material for a new study. The material offered by the historians is to be methodically read and methodically sifted with a view to the teaching which may be gained for the right ordering of human actions. . . . It is truth that is sought in this study, as in the writing of history. In that it is as one with philosophy. Its distinction from philosophy lies in the fact that philosophy seeks general precepts, while the study of history seeks the application and realization of precepts, the conditions and results of that realization. And for the reason by which philosophy and history are coupled, they are both fundamentally different from poetry. For while the main object of poetry is to give pleasure, philosophy and history are both serious" (pp. 84-85).

<sup>23</sup> *Leviathan*, II.29.369.

<sup>24</sup> *De Corpore*, pp. 10-11.

sovereignty. Given Hobbes's desire for a universal theory of human nature and politics, the scientific method he chooses seems to work well enough for his intended purposes. After all, scientific conclusions are intended to be ahistorical, or valid in all times and in all circumstances. In the words of Goldsmith, Hobbes wanted to create "a useful, systematic account of the world from a set of basic principles."<sup>25</sup> Hobbes would succeed in creating a systematic account in his political science treatises by reducing the complex nature of politics into a general set of laws derived from simple and well-defined elements. Given Hobbes's objective and his stance on history, it seems counterintuitive that he would use historical case studies to validate his science. Why, then, does Hobbes use examples of sovereigns from England's past?

Despite Hobbes's criticism of history, he nevertheless uses it extensively from chapter 19 of *Leviathan* on through to his last political work: *Behemoth*.<sup>26</sup> Given the sharp criticism of his science from Hobbes's contemporaries and the inability of his science to find its way to both the people and elites, Hobbes may have questioned the effectiveness of his science to create the sort of change necessary to prevent the political chaos that characterized the English Civil War. *Behemoth* gives us a clue that Hobbes may have previously underestimated the ability of Parliament to learn from experience, conceding in *Behemoth* that they have "learned the wit" to behave more prudently without the benefit of science or ratiocination. Hobbes's science may have also underestimated the capacity of individuals such as Lord Monck to achieve peace through

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<sup>25</sup> Goldsmith (1966), p. 43.

<sup>26</sup> Hobbes mentions King James I in *Leviathan* for "endeavouring the Union of his two Realms of *England* and *Scotland*. Which if he could have obtained, had in all likelihood prevented the Civill warres, which make both of those Kingdomes at this present, miserable" (*Leviathan*, II.19.251).

great strategy. These underestimations may have caused Hobbes to rethink or reflect upon his scientific project to incorporate new facts not available to him in the earlier part of his career. Since the “first grounds of all science are not only not beautiful, but poor, arid, and, in appearance, deformed,”<sup>27</sup> Hobbes may have sought a more complete understanding of politics by going back to rethink the first principles of his political science.

The dialogues do not seem to follow the model of the treatises in terms of their objectives. Rather than create a model of the world, the dialogues seem to take the world as it appears in all its complexity. The dialogue form of *Behemoth* and *A Dialogue* seems to magnify the chaotic nature of the subject. The characters take the discussion into digressions that deviate far from the central narrative. Instead of the methodical progression from basic definitions found in the treatises, the dialogues seem to present the commonwealth as a conglomeration of various laws, precedents, and customs resembling the “crasie building” discussed in Chapter 29 of *Leviathan*.<sup>28</sup> If the dialogues are an attempt by Hobbes to reformulate or reassess his science, the project does not appear to be scientific.

Yet the nature of the dialogue format, and the way in which Hobbes describes the commonwealth in his dialogues, seems less problematic when we observe Hobbes’s characterization of the first grounds of science described in *De Corpore*. While the goal of science is to produce a simplified and precise model of the phenomenon studied, Hobbes is realistic enough to understand that scientific models are, in many cases,

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<sup>27</sup> *De Corpore*, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> *Leviathan*, II,29,363.

incomplete or obscure in their first forms. If Hobbes wanted to rethink his philosophical and scientific project, the dialogue format gives him the opportunity to do so. What remains to be asked is what Hobbes specifically wanted to rethink, and why was his previous science unsuccessful?

Turning back to the “crasie building” analogy from *Leviathan*’s Chapter 29, Hobbes mentions that human beings as makers of institutions have the capacity “to conforme themselves into one firme and lasting edifice.”<sup>29</sup> However, “an imperfect institution,” or a defect in the constitutional structure of the regime, can prevent them from conforming into one commonwealth.<sup>30</sup> One wonders if anyone would—or even could—fashion all aspects of the commonwealth to fit harmoniously into a single plan in the manner of *Leviathan*’s “very able architect” from chapter 29. Sovereigns rarely—if ever—come to the throne with the people “like a clean paper, fit to receive whatsoever by Publique Authority shall be imprinted in them.”<sup>31</sup> The only circumstance where a sovereign would have no previous laws or customs would be at the commonwealth’s founding: that moment when a disparate people becomes a body politic through an original covenant. Like the state of nature construction, Hobbes can point to no specific point in history where there was not some established rule from a previous ruler. This presents a problem for Hobbes because it presents a challenge to sovereignty: to what extent are sovereigns bound by previous laws, customs, and rules made before the sovereign’s reign?

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<sup>29</sup> *Leviathan*, II.29.363.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, II.30.379.

Hobbes solves this problem by arguing that the sovereign is under no obligation to uphold past precedents. Not only does the sovereign have the power to legislate against past custom, but Hobbes also makes it very clear that unless the sovereign is free from the obligation to uphold past precedents, the sovereign is unable to fulfill the duty to protect the commonwealth.<sup>32</sup> Given the Long Parliament's accusation that Charles I broke the law by levying the ship money without Parliament's consent, Hobbes might have felt it was necessary to explain that the sovereign need not follow the customary procedure of calling Parliament to levy funds merely because past sovereigns have done so. Edward I instituted the customary procedure in question and provided Parliament enough of a legal precedent to challenge Charles I.<sup>33</sup> The use of such legal precedents to bind or find fault with the sovereign was something Hobbes's scientific philosophy argued against. Instead, Hobbes explained that the sovereign has the power to uphold or forego previous customs and precedents as the sovereign sees fit.<sup>34</sup> Hobbes argued, as A argued in *Behemoth*, that Charles I had the right to levy the ship money as a power inherent to the sovereign office. Therefore, Charles I could not be considered as a lawbreaker, since the sovereign through his observance or supersession of precedents defines which precedents are still applicable.

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<sup>32</sup> "When long Use obtaineth the authority of a Law, it is not the Length of Time that maketh the Authority, but the Will of the Sovereign signified by his silence . . . and it is no longer Law, then the Sovereign shall be silent therein. . . . The Judgement of what is reasonable, and what is to be abolished, belongeth to him that maketh the Law, which is the Sovereign Assembly, or Monarch" (ibid., II.26.313-314).

<sup>33</sup> *A Dialogue*, p. 61.

<sup>34</sup> "In cases where the Sovereign has prescribed no rule, there the Subject hath the liberty to do, or forbear, according to his own discretion. And therefore such Liberty is in some places more, and in some lesse; and in some times more, in other times lesse, according as they that have the Sovereignty shall think most convenient" (*Leviathan*, II.21.271).

Whether Charles I possessed or did not possess the right to ignore the custom has very little to do with Parliament's negative assessment of Charles I. While readers have assumed that *Behemoth* portrays Charles I in a favorable light,<sup>35</sup> he is not the only monarch that Hobbes discusses. Hobbes portrays William I, Henry VII, Henry VIII, and Queen Elizabeth as strong sovereigns possessing qualities that were lacking in Charles I. At one point in the dialogue, A talks of "two great virtues, that were severally in Henry VII and Henry VIII. . . . That of Henry VII was, without much noise of the people to fill his coffers; that of Henry VIII was an early severity; but this without the former cannot be exercised."<sup>36</sup> The qualities found in these two monarchs point to a facet of politics rarely discussed in Hobbes's treatises: the power of political skill.<sup>37</sup> In *Behemoth*, sovereignty entails more than the recognition of the duty to secure *salus populi*; sovereignty also requires the political skill to acquire and maintain the political power necessary to ensure *salus populi*. Read as a practical guide, *Behemoth* seems to emphasize political skill in a similar fashion to the way Machiavelli portrays it, which is something of a departure from *Leviathan*.

Using the examples of leaders portrayed in *Behemoth* and *A Dialogue*, we will examine how political skill influences political stability. What we will discover is that these dialogues contain a more pragmatic view of politics, a view similar to

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<sup>35</sup> In the introduction to the *Behemoth*, Stephen Holmes claims that the "Regret about the prayer-book episode is the closest Hobbes comes to admitting that royal misgovernment . . . led to the breakdown of authority" (*Behemoth*, p. xli).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>37</sup> An exception might be *A Discourse upon the Beginning of Tacitus*: one of three short discourses attributed to Hobbes. See *Three Discourses*, ed. Noel Reynolds & Arlene W. Saxonhouse (Chicago: University Press, 1995). This edition will be henceforth referred to as *Three Discourses*.

Machiavelli's, which is different from the theoretical argument found in Hobbes's earlier treatises. We will also explore the possibility that the collapse of Charles I's rule may have been due to a lack of political skill, offering a view different from that of the standard interpretation of *Behemoth* as a defense of Charles I's regime.

## **Section 2: William the Conqueror**

The first historical sovereign we consider is William the Conqueror, partly because of his appearance in Hobbes's dialogues and also because scholars consider Hobbes's treatment of the Norman Conquest an important model for understanding Hobbes's theory of sovereignty by acquisition. One scholar who affirms this view is Deborah Baumgold, who writes that "England was an absolute monarchy by virtue of the subjects' consent to the Conquest; and the Stuarts had inherited their title to the throne from William."<sup>38</sup> In short, Hobbes uses the example of the Norman Conquest as evidence of a form of rightful sovereignty different from sovereignty by consent. Hobbes considered sovereignty by acquisition or conquest as another means by which sovereignty could be transferred from one regime to another. The relatively peaceful and complete transfer of power from the Saxon regime to William the Conqueror was evidence that sovereignty by acquisition could be considered just as legitimate and enduring as a covenant operating on the principle of the tacit consent of the people to the new monarch.

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<sup>38</sup> See Deborah Baumgold's chapter "When Hobbes Needed History" in G.A.J. Rogers's and Tom Sorell's *Hobbes and History* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000), p. 32.



What is important to keep in mind, however, is what we observed in the previous chapter. Specifically, a rightful commonwealth may come into being through other means than simply through consent or conquest. Skill, or what was called “great strategy,” may also play a role. While the record clearly states that William I acquired the English lands through conquest, the mere act of conquest alone might not have been enough to maintain the regime. We must be careful not to let the mere act of acquisition overshadow the fact that conquerors are also governors and, as such, require skill to govern effectively. Though much has been written about the Norman Conquest in Hobbes’s work, not much has been written about Hobbes’s assessment of the man responsible for the Norman Conquest: William I. What did William the Conqueror do or not do in Hobbes’s estimation to provide for the successful transition from Saxon to Norman rule?

Hobbes’s description of William I in *Leviathan* portrays him as a strong, but not particularly restrained, conqueror. His assessment is mostly critical, describing William’s oath to Rome “not to infringe the liberty of the Church” as an example of William’s surrender of his sovereign prerogatives.<sup>39</sup> He also describes William’s appropriation of “divers Lands reserved to his own use . . . and divers services reserved on the Land he gave his subjects.”<sup>40</sup> Hobbes uses William’s appropriation as evidence of the sovereign’s right to distribute wealth. He does this not to explain why William’s appropriation was good. If anything, he uses the example of William as evidence of how monarchs “may ordain the doing of many things in pursuit of their Passions . . . but this is

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<sup>39</sup> *Leviathan*, II.29.364.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, II.24.298.

not enough to authorise any subject, either to make war upon, or so much as to accuse of Injustice, or any way to speak evill of their Sovereign.”<sup>41</sup> While William’s appropriation of lands to himself might be an example of his iniquity, it is not injustice by Hobbes’s standards. Yet as iniquitous as William I’s actions were,<sup>42</sup> why was the transition of power between Saxon and Norman rule so successful? Despite being perhaps far more iniquitous than Charles I, William I would hold on to his possessions, eventually transferring them successfully to his son William Rufus.

In *A Dialogue*, Hobbes creates an exchange between the lawyer and the philosopher that may shed some light on why the transition was successful. The lawyer asks the philosopher whether William I governed by virtue of his “natural capacity, as he is a man,” or his “politik capacity, as a king.”<sup>43</sup> This distinction between natural and political capacity goes to the heart of the differences between the earlier and later Hobbes on the foundations of leadership. The pre-Restoration Hobbes argued that the office of sovereign, or the sovereign in his or her political capacity, created the legitimacy necessary for governance. This is because Hobbes’s conception of nature can offer no guidance for determining who should rule, as “the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable, as that one man can thereupon claim to himself any benefit, to which

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<sup>41</sup> *Leviathan*, II.24.297.

<sup>42</sup> In *A Dialogue*, the philosopher explains that the English people “do not know in what Condition we were in the time of the Conqueror, when it was a shame to be an *English-Man*, who if he grumbled at the base Offices he was put to by his *Norman Masters*, received no other Answer but this, Thou art but an *English-Man*” (*A Dialogue*, p. 59).

<sup>43</sup> *A Dialogue*, p. 160. It should be noted that Hobbes briefly mentions the distinction between natural and political capacity in *Leviathan*’s account of William’s appropriation of lands for himself, for “it seems they were not reserved for his Maintenance in his Publique, but in his Natural capacity” (*Leviathan*, II.24.298). However, Hobbes does not go on to explain the distinction between public and natural capacity until *A Dialogue*.

another may not pretend, as well as he.”<sup>44</sup> In other words, Hobbes’s science as written from *Elements of Law* through *Leviathan* cannot determine a natural cause for why one human being should rule another. The question of who should rule is a matter that is decided by convention, as nature can offer no guidance. This is why the office of sovereign is, at its source, a political creation. The actual practice of governing is less important than the application of the rules that are discernible through ratiocination, and that receive the commonwealth’s consent, that create the office in the first place. While Hobbes also mentions that conquest is another legitimate means to institute a commonwealth, the actual mechanism that establishes the conqueror as the new sovereign has little to do with the conqueror’s natural superiority to govern better than the original. Instead, the reason the commonwealth submits to the conqueror is because the conquered sovereign is divested of political power.<sup>45</sup> Thus, the natural power of the sovereign for the early Hobbes is in large part dependent on the political power the office grants.

*A Dialogue* has a different conception of the origin of sovereign power. When the philosopher examined the reign of William the Conqueror more completely, he concluded that the legitimacy of William’s reign could not be explained in terms of political capacity alone. A sovereign acting in his political capacity is limited to those actions that are consistent with the public good.<sup>46</sup> In this way, the sovereign who acts according to the authority of the office of sovereign is not absolute, and is in fact, rather

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<sup>44</sup> *Leviathan*, I.13.183.

<sup>45</sup> “The obligation of subjects to the sovereign, is understood to last as long, and no longer, than the power lasteth, by which he is able to protect them” (Ibid., II.21.272).

<sup>46</sup> *A Dialogue*, p. 160.

limited. A sovereign's political capacity is so limited that his actions are subject to the review and discretion of Parliament. This is a radical departure from Hobbes's previous conception of sovereignty that is not lost on Susan Okin.<sup>47</sup>

The philosopher quickly points out that William the Conqueror had power in excess of his political capacity. William I had the authority to acquire and distribute property for his own personal use as he saw fit. He did not need to consult Parliament for permission to distribute property, and he did not need to distribute the property exclusively for "the benefit of his people."<sup>48</sup> On the contrary, a significant portion of England's territory was retained "in his own hands by the name of forests for his own recreation or magnificence."<sup>49</sup> In order to explain how William I was able to reserve such lands, Hobbes has to go beyond mere political capacity to find the justification. This is how Hobbes establishes natural capacity as the basis of sovereign legitimacy, for only natural capacity can explain how William I could possess such discretion regarding the disposition of lands in his kingdom.

If we are to assume for the moment that natural capacity is the same as political skill, then what are the signs that a sovereign has a natural capacity to govern? The philosopher tells the lawyer that "great monarchies" are established in two ways: "by war" and by "the number and riches" of the monarch's subjects.<sup>50</sup> In other words, what separates a great monarchy from an average one has very little to do with the powers and

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<sup>47</sup> "Hobbes is conceding to Parliament an importance it had never had before in his writings." See Okin (1982), p. 419.

<sup>48</sup> *A Dialogue*, p. 160.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

autonomy of the ruler. Rather, great monarchs and great monarchies are determined by political results. The sovereign's ability to provide military victory and domestic prosperity is the measure of the sovereign's greatness.

This is a departure from Hobbes's previous conception of politics, the conception found in his scientific treatises. In his scientific treatises, Hobbes seems to emphasize that the constitutional arrangement of the institution of sovereign determines the power of the sovereign. What matters most is not the person who fills the role of sovereign, but rather, what the constitution allows the sovereign to do. In Hobbes's dialogues, the constitutional arrangement that defines the office of sovereign seems less important than the personal disposition of the sovereign who fills the role. To be fair, effective sovereigns are those who can act, and a well-arranged commonwealth allows a sovereign to act effectively. While this explains how *constitutionally disempowered* sovereigns fail, this does not explain how *constitutionally strong* sovereigns such as Charles I fail. In addition, constitutional arrangement does not explain why constitutionally constrained sovereigns succeed. This is a matter that looms large for the simple fact that Hobbes argues in *A Dialogue* for a stronger role for Parliament than we are accustomed to seeing from him.

Hobbes's support for a strong Parliament in *A Dialogue* is a puzzle that both Joseph Cropsey and Susan Okin have attempted to solve. For Cropsey, Hobbes interpreted Parliament as "the people's consent" in institutional form.<sup>51</sup> That is to say, Parliament acts as a sort of rubber stamp that determines which of the sovereign's proclamations have the approval of the people. For Okin, Parliament is a more active

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<sup>51</sup> *A Dialogue*, introduction, p. 47.

participant in the affairs of the sovereign and “the advice and deliberations of Parliament are an important supplement to his [the sovereign’s] natural reasoning powers.”<sup>52</sup>

Despite these differences, both Cropsey and Okin support the notion that Parliament is an indispensable element in proper governance; what distinguishes an effective monarchy from an ineffective one depends on adherence to the proper form of government, and this means adhering to a system where the sovereign governs jointly with Parliament.

While this explanation seems to solve the puzzle, two questions come to mind. First, what if Parliament is wrong? Hobbes makes a rather clear case in *Behemoth* that Parliament is wrong far more often than it is right. This is due primarily to the nature of the individuals who comprise Parliament. For example, *Behemoth* describes the Parliament of the civil war period as composed of “ambitious ministers and ambitious gentlemen” who saw Parliament as a means of self-aggrandizement.<sup>53</sup> This observation coincides with Hobbes’s assessment of sovereign assemblies in chapter 19 of *Leviathan*; the members of such assemblies “serve one anothers covetousnesse and ambition by turns.”<sup>54</sup> Given this continuity between the scientific Hobbes and the post-Restoration Hobbes, it is safe to say that Hobbes maintained the belief that members of Parliament place personal ambition ahead of the common good.

The second question we should ask is why a sovereign who provides for the common good through edicts and executive orders should feel the need to govern through a representative body such as Parliament? Given Hobbes’s view that parliaments in

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<sup>52</sup> Okin (1982), p. 421.

<sup>53</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 23.

<sup>54</sup> *Leviathan*, II.19.243.

general can be self-serving, it is quite possible that parliaments serve the common good less often or with less concern when a sovereign works through parliaments. Conversely, if a sovereign is both capable and cognizant of the duty to promote *salus populi*, he is able to serve the common good through his prerogative alone without the need to seek Parliament's approval. To force an otherwise capable sovereign to consult with or cater to Parliament would be unwise. At best, the process of governing would be needlessly cumbersome, redundant, and slow. At worst, the process would become corrupt or contentious, creating a scenario that Hobbes knew all too well: civil war, or more specifically, the English Civil War. How can Hobbes promote a strong Parliament while at the same time ensuring that the capable sovereign has enough autonomy to govern effectively?

According to *A Dialogue*, the sovereign can exercise his authority in one of two ways. The first way includes commands that the sovereign enacts "by consent of the people of his kingdom."<sup>55</sup> One may interpret "consent" in this instance as the consent of Parliament: the body that represents the people. The sovereign acts this way by virtue of his "politik capacity" or in the capacity of the powers vested in the office of sovereign. The second type includes commands "by word of mouth only, or by letters signed with his hand, or sealed with any of his private seals."<sup>56</sup> These acts do not go through Parliament, and consequently, cannot be considered acts that include the consent of the people. They are, however, reflections of the sovereign's judgment, albeit from a different source from the constitutional powers vested in the office. Instead of deriving

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<sup>55</sup> *A Dialogue*, p. 162.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

their authority from the sovereign's office, these commands derive their authority from the sovereign's "natural capacity" or from the sovereign's personal qualities. Their efficacy does not depend on whether the people consent to them and, in fact, does not depend on whether the sovereign is even granted the power to enact them within the scope of the office. Rather, the efficacy of such commands depends on the sovereign's abilities and capacities as a human being to enact and enforce them.

Thus there seems to be two bases on which a sovereign may enact policy. He may govern through his *political capacity* in full view of the public, relying on his constitutional powers in a relationship with a parliament to pass legislation. Alternatively, the sovereign can govern based upon his *natural capacity*, relying on his judgment outside of conventional procedure. When the sovereign relies on natural capacity to govern, the powers derive less from the office as constituted and are instead derived from the sovereign's natural capacity, which might include resources such as natural charisma, public opinion, military strength, or personal wealth. The lawyer in *A Dialogue* distinguishes political and natural capacity as "no more than private and public right," and agrees with the philosopher that all policies—whether deriving from political or natural capacity—ultimately derive from the sovereign's natural capacity.<sup>57</sup> The question we must ask ourselves is why a sovereign would even bother to govern in his political capacity when a sovereign can govern from his natural capacity. It would seem that governing from natural capacity is far less problematic because the sovereign does not have to govern with a parliament.

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<sup>57</sup> "Nevertheless, his publick Commands, though they be made in his politik Capacity, have their original from his natural Capacity" (*A Dialogue*, p. 162)



There are reasons why a sovereign would want to govern in consultation with a parliament. If a measure is controversial or burdensome, it might behoove a sovereign to work with the representatives of the people so he may resist accusation and blame. While the sovereign reserves the right to enact any policy he sees fit without consulting anybody, having the right to act independently does not imply that the sovereign should always work independently. A good example of how a sovereign can use Parliament to enact controversial measures is the first Tudor monarch and holder of one of A's "two great virtues," Henry VII.

### Section 3: Henry VII

Henry VII is important for understanding Hobbes partly because Hobbes's former employer Francis Bacon published a biography about Henry VII in 1622, around the time when Hobbes served as Bacon's secretary. So successful was Bacon's *History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh* that "it became the standard account of Henry's times, life, rule, and character,"<sup>58</sup> but that does not imply Bacon's *History* was a wholly positive assessment of the first Tudor monarch. Bacon's assessment of Henry VII's character is mixed. Henry VII was "one of the best sort of wonders; a wonder for wise men."<sup>59</sup> But Bacon was also acutely aware of Henry VII's flaws.

Two flaws of Henry VII become immediately apparent to the reader of Bacon's history: Henry's lack of foresight and Henry's greed. When discussing Henry VII's misfortunes, Bacon asserts that "the perpetual troubles of his fortunes ... could not have

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<sup>58</sup> See Jerry Weinberger's introduction in Sir Francis Bacon's *History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 5. Hereafter referred to as *History of Henry VII*.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 203.

been without great defects and main errors in his nature, customs, and proceedings.”<sup>60</sup>

While not precisely sure about the nature of these “defects and main errors,” Bacon is convinced that they involve “the shortness of his foresight, or the strength of his will, or the dazzling of his suspicions.”<sup>61</sup> Bacon proposes these character flaws as explanations for Henry VII’s inability to “prevent and remove” dangers “afar off.”<sup>62</sup> Henry VII made up for this lack of prudence by employing “a dexterity to deliver himself from dangers when they pressed him,”<sup>63</sup> which is to say that Henry VII’s lack of foresight only increased his resolve to solve problems when they arose. Henry’s inability to foresee dangerous circumstances caused him to be more suspicious of plots than was typical for a monarch. Bacon noticed that Henry VII was “full of apprehensions and suspicions”<sup>64</sup> and created “secret spials which he did employ both at home and abroad” to warn him of plots against his regime.<sup>65</sup> If we examine Henry VII’s faults in Machiavellian terms, it would be difficult for us to view Henry VII as an astute sovereign according to *The Prince*, assuming that Bacon’s assessment of Henry’s lack of foresight is true. For Machiavelli, foresight was part of a sovereign’s *virtù* and a quality that separated good and bad princes.<sup>66</sup> While Bacon’s Henry was rather adept at handling difficulties when

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 210.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 209.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 207.

<sup>66</sup> “For the Romans did . . . what all wise princes should do: they not only have to have regard for present troubles but also for future ones, and they have to avoid these with all their industry because, when one

they arose, he was unable to prevent such difficulties before they befell him and his kingdom.

While Henry's lack of foresight may have been a defect of intellect, Henry's second flaw was one of character. Bacon describes Henry VII's desire for material wealth, or a desire for "gathering and heaping up of treasure . . . beyond his purpose."<sup>67</sup> Two magistrates in Henry VII's service, Empson and Dudley, are alleged by Bacon to have used "sundry artificial devices and terrors to extort" from the people and lords "great fines and ransoms."<sup>68</sup>

Henry's taxes became a major source of discontent among the people causing several popular uprisings. One occurred in Yorkshire, when the people "grew into a great mutiny . . . and neither could nor would pay the subsidy."<sup>69</sup> Complicating matters was that Yorkshire fared well under the previous regime of Richard III. Consequently, the fond "memory of King Richard was so strong" in Yorkshire that any perceived slight by Henry VII against the people could cause an insurrection. Eager to prove his loyalty to Henry VII, the Earl of Northumberland "assembled the principal justices and freeholders" of Yorkshire and informed them of the King's demands, using the same "imperious

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forsees from afar, one can easily find a remedy for them but when you wait until they come close to you, the medicine is not in time because the disease has become incurable" (*The Prince*, ch. 3, p. 12). It should also be noted that in Jerry Weinberger's introduction to Bacon's history, Henry VII is portrayed as a transitional figure between the personality driven principality and the constitutionally driven republic. In this respect, Henry VII can best be described by Machiavelli's republican tradition as outlined in the *Discourses* rather than the model Machiavelli describes in *The Prince*. See Weinberger's introduction in Bacon's *History of Henry VII*, p. 13.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

language wherein the King had written to him.”<sup>70</sup> Of course, the Earl’s demeanor proved unpopular among the people who subsequently “slew him and divers of his servants” in his home.<sup>71</sup> Under the leadership of John Egremont and John a Chamber, the people of Yorkshire fought against Henry VII “for the maintenance of their liberties.”<sup>72</sup>

Perhaps the most conspicuous example of Henry VII’s greed was how he used the Scottish rebellion to levy an additional tax against his subjects. This tax allowed Henry VII to raise £120,000 requiring an additional tenth and fifteenth to be levied against each subject.<sup>73</sup> Lord Audley and his Cornish followers considered this unjust, as they believed “it was not their duty to finance a campaign against the King of the Scots.”<sup>74</sup> So egregious was this tax in the eyes of the residents of Cornwall that they felt “grinded to powder with payments,” and subsequently decided to rebel against the crown.<sup>75</sup> While there is no indication that Bacon approved of the Cornish Rebellion, his characterization of the tax supports his conclusion that Henry VII suffered from an inordinate love of money. Instead of avoiding wars, Bacon’s Henry saw wars as an opportunity, or “as a mine of treasure of a strange kind of ore; iron at the top, and gold and silver at the

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> See Michael Van Cleave Alexander’s *The First of the Tudors: A Study of Henry VII and His Reign*, 1980 (Totowa, NJ: Rowan & Littlefield), p. 115.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

bottom.”<sup>76</sup> With the exception of the Scottish rebellion, most of the trouble during Henry VII’s reign concerned taxation.

Another clue that Henry VII might be an important model for Hobbes is that he is the first English sovereign Hobbes considers in his philosophical works and the sole representative English monarch considered by Hobbes in the period between the *Elements of Law* and the first half of *Leviathan*. While Hobbes does not mention Bacon in his *Elements of Law*,<sup>77</sup> he does use Henry VII’s reign to describe one of the “two sorts” of discontent that “dispose men to sedition.”<sup>78</sup> The type of sedition described is “the fear of arrest and imprisonment” and the example that illustrates Hobbes’s point is the rebellion “of the Cornish men that refused to pay a subsidy, and, under the conduct of the Lord Audley, gave the King [Henry VII] battle upon Blackheath.”<sup>79</sup> This is in reference to the battle of Deptford Bridge in 1497, when Henry VII put down an insurrection from Cornwall over the king’s tax policy. Hobbes also mentions the Yorkshire rebellion and observes that rebels “murdered the Earl of Northumberland in his house.”<sup>80</sup> No other mention of Henry VII’s reign is found in *Elements of Law*, but the context in which Hobbes uses the reference is noteworthy because it portrays the failings of Henry’s regime rather than any successes. If we were to read nothing else about Henry VII’s reign from Hobbes, we would assume that his reign was marked by

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> That is, of course, if we do not consider “the man from St. Alban” to be Bacon, who was the viscount of St. Albans.

<sup>78</sup> *Elements of Law*, II.8.1-2.168-169.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., II.8.2.169.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

insurrections and fear of punishment. Hobbes in this way takes a similar view to that of his employer Francis Bacon, who blamed Henry VII's greed for destabilizing the English commonwealth. In this respect, Hobbes seems to view Henry VII as a bad sovereign who disrupted the people's peaceable pursuit of commodious living.

This alone makes Henry VII worthy of further examination, but when we consider that Henry VII possesses one of "the two great virtues" mentioned by A in *Behemoth*,<sup>81</sup> we find that what was portrayed as a problematic reign in *Elements* might not be so problematic after all. On the contrary, *Behemoth's* praise informs us that Hobbes might have viewed Henry VII as a model sovereign that should be admired for his ability "without much noise of the people to fill his coffers."<sup>82</sup> According to the historical record that Hobbes considered, we could hardly say that Henry's taxation policy was carried out "without much noise of the people." As we have seen, Henry's assessments caused such an uproar amongst the people that civil insurrections took place in Cornwall and Yorkshire. Given the Hobbes that we know, we would think that he would see Henry VII's reign as a failure because his taxation policy caused civil unrest. Yet despite the civil insurrections, Hobbes's A claimed that Henry VII possessed one of the two great virtues that great sovereigns should possess. What is Hobbes trying to tell us here?

Hobbes fails to mention that Henry VII was a master at manipulating Parliament. Biographers from the twentieth century marvel at Henry VII's ability to use Parliament as a means to impose his will on the kingdom. One biographer writes, "Henry exercised firm control over the deliberations of all his parliaments . . . he himself was a capable if

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<sup>81</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 57.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

not brilliant parliamentarian who intuitively knew when to compromise and when to stand firm and insist on having his own way.”<sup>83</sup> Another biographer was less flattering, but could not deny that it was “Henry’s success in using the power he had acquired over Parliament to secure a legal basis for his despotism and arm it with still further powers that is the most novel feature of his rule.”<sup>84</sup> Part of the reason Henry VII was able to acquire so much wealth from his subjects was that he was able to convince Parliament that new stipends, taxes, and war funds were needed. The best example of this was Henry’s speech in 1497, “where he did much exaggerate both the malice and cruel predatory war . . . made by the King of Scotland.”<sup>85</sup> Convinced by Henry VII’s speech, the Parliament granted him the subsidy that eventually led to the Cornish Rebellion.

Unlike the rebellion against Charles I, the Cornish Rebellion did not topple the monarchy. Having prepared for war against the Scots, Henry VII was able to suppress the rebellion through force before it could engulf London. Part of the reason Henry VII was so decisive is because of his suspicious nature. He knew that the war against Scotland, the conspiracy under Perkin, and the Cornish Rebellion “would come at him all at once”<sup>86</sup> if he did not put down the Cornish Rebellion while he could. Though criticized for his lack of foresight, perhaps Henry VII did have just enough *virtù* to understand threats to his regime before they grew too large to quell. Nevertheless, Henry VII’s decisive action against the Cornish Rebellion shows that he could govern through

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<sup>83</sup> Alexander (1980), p. 136.

<sup>84</sup> See Gladys Temperly’s *Henry VII* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1914), p. 251.

<sup>85</sup> *History of Henry VII*, p. 146.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

natural capacity with as much skill as he could govern in his political capacity through Parliament.

#### Section 4: Henry VIII

*Behemoth's* A mentions a second monarch that embodies the second of the “two great virtues”: Henry VIII. The virtue Henry VIII possessed is “an early severity,” or the ability to spot potentially troublesome developments within the commonwealth, using harsh methods to quell the potential danger. This was not the first instance where A discussed Henry’s severity. Earlier in *Behemoth's* first dialogue, A explained to B how Henry VIII was able to “extinguish the authority of the Pope in England.”<sup>87</sup> The character lists five reasons why Henry VIII was so effective. Of the five reasons, three involve circumstances and dispositions favorable to the Reformation both inside and outside of England at the time.<sup>88</sup> Two had to do with Henry’s character or policies. Of the two reasons directly attributable to Henry VIII, one was that “King Henry was of a nature quick and severe in the punishing of such as should be the first to oppose his designs.”<sup>89</sup> Unlike Henry VII, Henry VIII apparently had enough foresight to anticipate potential dangers before they could ferment into a full rebellion. The other reason for Henry VIII’s success was his controversial requisition of the “abbeyes and all other

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<sup>87</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 18.

<sup>88</sup> The first reason A gives for Henry VIII’s success was the “insolent and licentious” nature of the “priests, monks, and friars” themselves. The second reason was the spread of Lutheranism among “a great many men of the greatest judgment.” The fifth reason is that “England is another manner of kingdom than Navarre,” which might be a reference to the invasion of Navarre during the Italian wars of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. A uses this observation to compare the relatively weak power of Papal authority in England as opposed to his authority amongst the kingdoms on the continent proper. This is why any attempt by the Pope to transfer authority to another monarch more suitable to Papal interests would be “in vain” (*ibid.*, pp. 18-19).

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.



religious houses” giving Henry considerable influence over “the most eminent gentlemen in every county.”<sup>90</sup> These gentlemen wanted their share of the considerable wealth that suddenly came into the king’s possession. The closing of the monasteries created a large group of displaced friars, priests, nuns, and monks. Some of the revenue generated by the former monasteries went towards pensions and stipends to those left without a vocation.<sup>91</sup> This helped ensure the loyalty of a great many potential adversaries, which might be the reason why Hobbes lists the pensions as one of the reasons for Henry VIII’s success.

Henry VIII’s character and his pension policy were reasons that the removal of papal influence was so successful during his reign. His foresight and willingness to go to drastic lengths to quell potential sources of unrest are natural characteristics of Henry VIII that made him an effective sovereign. Henry VIII knew that the monasteries had so much wealth and influence that they could constitute a significant threat to his regime.<sup>92</sup> Given his desire to break away from Rome, Henry knew that the religious orders would oppose him. Therefore, it seems only natural that Henry VIII would go to great lengths to destroy the monasteries. However, the more interesting aspect of the suppression of the monasteries is the method Henry VIII used to dissolve them. As *Behemoth’s* B

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>91</sup> “Still, it is necessary to bear in mind that by no means all the religious who were deprived of their homes and turned out into the world to begin life afresh were provided with any pittance whatever to secure them against poverty, or even, in many cases, it is to be feared, absolute starvation.” See Francis Gasquet’s *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries*. 1899. Ballantyne, Hanson & Co.: London, UK, p. 435.

<sup>92</sup> The actual amount of wealth and territory under monastic control is a matter of debate, and estimates range from one third of the total amount of wealth in the realm to “at least one sixth of the whole of England.” See Kenneth Pickthorn’s *Early Tudor Government: Henry VIII*. 1951. University Press: Cambridge, UK, pp. 376-377.

suggested, Henry could have waited until he raised enough money for an army to destroy the monasteries, killing his political opposition in the process.<sup>93</sup> That way, he could have kept all of the wealth for himself and his kingdom. Instead, Henry chose to either sell most of the property well below the market price or give it away in the form of pensions.<sup>94</sup> Far from a misstep or weakness of Henry VIII, this liberality with the spoils was, as we have seen, one of A's reasons why England was able to break away from Rome's authority so easily. Why was this liberality so successful?

Writing in the 1950's, Kenneth Pickthorn asked, "why he [Henry VIII] did not keep it all for himself?"<sup>95</sup> The answer is that the monastic property became useful as a way of breaking up the potentially dangerous coalition between the religious authorities and the nobility. By the time of Henry VIII's reign, the monasteries had developed significant connections to the nobility. As nobles and other private citizens took over more of the administrative duties of the monastic estates over time, it was in the interest of this new class of administrators to maintain the monasteries.<sup>96</sup> Keeping the wealth would have upset both the religious orders and this new administrative class, potentially uniting them against their common foe. Instead, Henry used the spoils to empower this

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<sup>93</sup> "This that you say looks (methinks) like an advice to the King, to let them alone till he have gotten ready money to levy and maintain a sufficient army, and then to fall upon them and destroy them" (*Behemoth*, pp. 57-58).

<sup>94</sup> "Gratuitous grants, sales of lands at nominal prices, and other ways whereby the capital value of the prize was diminished, prevented the income actually received by the royal treasury from reaching at any time the sum at which the revenue of the monastic houses was computed" (Gasquet, 1899, p. 397).

<sup>95</sup> Pickthorn (1951), p. 377.

<sup>96</sup> At the time of the suppression of the monasteries, "a powerful section of the population, mainly but by no means solely of the governing class, especially powerful by its local knowledge and connections, was already co-operating, for profit, in the exploitation of monastic resources, and it would have been a very rash government which tried to dispossess them as well as the monks" (*ibid.*, p. 379).

administrative class and select religious notables at the expense of the religious orders. By offering the spoils, Henry VIII earned allies at a time when significant and potentially dangerous changes could have undermined his regime. At the same time, Henry VIII was able to shape Parliament in a way that ultimately served his interests. Before the dissolution of the monasteries, the House of Lords contained twenty-eight abbots and two priors constituting “a clear and permanent majority” when combined with the twenty-eight bishops.<sup>97</sup> After the dissolution, the number of religious authorities in the House of Lords *decreased* while the number of landed gentry in the House of Lords *increased*.<sup>98</sup> By using the spoils in the way that he did, Henry VIII was able to achieve a double victory over his political foes: he would decrease the power and influence of those elements that opposed his religious reforms and increase his allies within the Parliament through the use of land grants and pensions.

One can view this political maneuver as another example of how strategy can be useful for a sovereign in his obligation to maintain stability. While it is well within the sovereign’s power and right to work *outside* the established constitutional framework, a much better option is to use political opportunities to shape competing interests *within* the constitutional framework. As separate sources of legitimacy, Parliament, religious movements, and landed elites are also sources of potential unrest. However, they need not be sources of unrest if a sovereign is able to manipulate these competing interests through whatever means the sovereign has at his disposal. Rather than assert his

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., pp. 384-385.

<sup>98</sup> Pickthorn (1951) states that “after the Dissolution the lay lords for ever outnumbered the bishops” (ibid., p. 385).

superiority over Parliament and the religious authorities, Henry VIII used the spoils from the monasteries to shape Parliament and religion into institutions more amicable to his interests. Perhaps this is why *Behemoth's* A lists the distribution of the spoils as one of the five factors that made England's separation from Rome so successful.

What makes Henry VIII's reign an important case study for Hobbes? Since a sovereign should govern Hobbes's ideal commonwealth as both the chief religious authority and the chief secular authority,<sup>99</sup> conventional wisdom might conclude that Henry VIII's enduring legacy was his success in placing himself at the head of the English church. However, Hobbes's assessment of Henry VIII's success in ultimately uniting religious and temporal authority is, at best, lukewarm. This is because the religious authorities "did think the pulling down of the Pope was the setting up of them (in England) in his place . . . that their spiritual power did depend not upon the authority of the King, but of Christ himself."<sup>100</sup> In each of the three places where A discussed the consequence of removing papal authority in England,<sup>101</sup> he came to the same conclusion: that the rise of the factional Protestantism that led to the English Civil War was a direct result of Henry VIII's removal of papal authority. What A does not criticize, however, is Henry VIII's decision to acquire the monasteries and use the spoils to quell discontent against his authority. In other words, Henry VIII is important because of his ability to make wise decisions applicable to the moment, rather than in light of some grand design. One can view this as a more pragmatic view of sovereignty than is typical in Hobbes's

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<sup>99</sup> *Leviathan*, II.29.370-372.

<sup>100</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 56.

<sup>101</sup> In addition to the above reference in note 100, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 20-21, 135.

philosophy. To use Hobbes's language from *Leviathan*, Henry VIII was not an "able architect" as much as he was a shrewd carpenter: one who was able to see and repair the problems arising in the "crasie building" of the English commonwealth. This is not a weakness of Henry VIII. On the contrary, Hobbes praised Henry VIII for his "early severity," which can be interpreted in this context as his ability to overcome potentially difficult circumstances using the natural and political resources at hand.

### Section 5: Elizabeth I

Henry VIII would leave it to his daughter, Elizabeth I, to quell the discontent caused by the removal of papal authority from England. If Hobbes's assessment of Elizabeth's success in this endeavor was correct, she was very successful. *Behemoth's* account of Queen Elizabeth's reign is especially favorable towards her, praising her "fear and jealousy" for keeping religious and popular factions from tearing down her regime during her reign.<sup>102</sup> Unlike her predecessor Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth did not need to banish religious and popular minorities from England to prevent their insurrection. Even though Elizabeth allowed religious and popular factions to preach freely and make their views heard, "neither of them did this very boldly during the time of Queen Elizabeth,"<sup>103</sup> implying that she was able to mitigate dissent in a way that Charles I was not.

Compared with the boldness of these factions during the reign of Charles I, factional conflict during Queen Elizabeth's reign was, by Hobbes's account,

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

comparatively benign. Like Britain during the reign of Charles I, the religious composition of Britain at the time of Elizabeth's reign included Catholics, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and small Protestant groups "commonly called by the name of fanatics."<sup>104</sup> Unlike these same factions in the time of Charles I, however, religious factions would not overthrow Queen Elizabeth. Obviously, Elizabeth possessed some skill or instituted some policy that allowed her to govern effectively despite the disposition of the various religious factions within her commonwealth.

There is historical evidence confirming that religious factions were indeed wary of Elizabeth's "fear and jealousy." Together with her secretary Sir Robert Cecil, Elizabeth I presided over what one recent historian called "a national-security state based on both formal and informal intelligence apparatuses."<sup>105</sup> Given the high state of religious tension during Elizabeth's reign as evidenced by the Northern Rebellion and the Spanish Invasion, it would seem only natural that the Queen would take extra precautions to quell any sort of dissent before it could fully manifest itself. However, Elizabeth's Parliament was far more aggressive in suppressing religious dissent than was Elizabeth herself.<sup>106</sup> A particularly instructive episode is Parliament's attempt to pass a bill to

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<sup>104</sup> Protestant groups such "as Brownists, Anabaptists, Independents, Fifth-monarchy-men, Quakers, and divers others," were persecuted and exiled under the reign of Queen Mary returned "in the time of Queen Elizabeth" (ibid., p. 136).

<sup>105</sup> See Curtis C. Breight's *Surveillance, Militarism, and Drama in the Elizabethan Era* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1996), p. 51.

<sup>106</sup> "In 1593 the Cecilian Parliament was cracking down on the religiously disaffected from both sides of the spectrum, viewing both Catholic and Puritan opponents as seditious and traitorous. [Christopher] Marlowe fits into this persecution. He is painted as an atheist seducing men from allegiance to Church, State, and Queen. As a pro-Catholic sympathizer and commoner, he is killed at precisely the same time as the pro-Puritan commoners Barrow, Greenwood, and Penry. All are killed for ideas and/or writings subversive of the state and its church. All are rendered scapegoats for movements which the Cecilians could not extirpate, but for which the regime could provide the terror of negative examples" (ibid., p. 156).

modify the 1559 Act of Supremacy. In this bill of 1563, anyone who maintained the authority of the Pope by refusing to swear the oath of supremacy to the crown would suffer “praemunire (loss of lands and goods and imprisonment during pleasure) for the first offense, and treason for the second.”<sup>107</sup> The intent of the bill was to mitigate the threat posed by Catholics who refused to acknowledge a Protestant queen as their lawful sovereign. While this bill at first glance appears as something that Hobbes might support, we as readers of Hobbes have to question whether a bill of this severity serves the ultimate interests of the sovereign and the commonwealth the sovereign oversees. In other words, does a bill that requires a subject to swear an oath against his or her conscience truly serve the interests of *salus populi*? More importantly, who is a better judge of what is in the interest of *salus populi* than the sovereign commissioned to oversee the safety and welfare of the people? In the case of the 1563 bill, Elizabeth thought the penalties Parliament sought were too severe to serve her interests and the interests of the commonwealth as a whole. However, to refuse royal assent would severely weaken her standing with her Parliament, her church, and her advisors. Instead, Elizabeth refused “to execute a legal provision of which she disapproved,”<sup>108</sup> and would seldom enforce the penalties against Catholics who refused the oath of allegiance. In fact, she would vigorously defend her sovereign prerogatives against Parliament’s attempts to enact legislation with the intent of undermining her authority, especially on matters pertaining to religion.

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<sup>107</sup> See J.E. Neale’s *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments: 1559-1581* (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1958), p. 117.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

Elizabeth's actions against the "Bill and Book" cases of the late 1580's show how vigorously she defended her sovereign authority when it was challenged. In an attempt to make the Book of Common Prayer more acceptable to Presbyterians and other non-Anglican Protestants, Anthony Cope attempted to introduce a version through Parliament in 1586. This was the first of many "Bill and Book" cases in the later part of Elizabeth's reign. The attempt by members of Parliament to override the Queen's authority in religion was something that "would bring on themselves her Majesty's indignation for daring to deal with matters belonging to her own charge and direction."<sup>109</sup> She would imprison those who questioned her authority as Defender of the Faith in Parliament, including Cope himself, as a "display of discipline."<sup>110</sup> The majority of her Parliament and Privy Counselors were quick to view Catholicism as the greatest threat to Elizabeth's supremacy, but "the Queen's instinct about the danger from Puritanism was clear and sound," and she was equally vigilant against attempts by Protestants to divest her of her role over matters pertaining to religion in her realm. This vigorous defense of her prerogatives should not lead us to believe that Elizabeth intended to promote any particular version of worship. Episodes such as the refusal to enforce the 1563 Supremacy Act suggested that Elizabeth used her power sparingly, and showed mercy and toleration in matters of conscience. While Hobbes acknowledged Elizabeth's "fear and jealousy," he also acknowledged her toleration and restraint in his later works by referring to her High Commission on heresy several times in his works.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 157.



Hobbes mentions Elizabeth's High Commission on heresy in three of his works: *Leviathan*, *A Dialogue*, and *Behemoth*. According to *Leviathan*, Elizabeth dissolved "the Power of the Popes" in England under her commission of bishops, and the bishops would instead "exercise the same in Right of the Queen and her Successours; though by retaining the phrase *Jure Divino*, they were thought to demand it by immediate Right from God."<sup>111</sup> Looking at this assessment alone would suggest that Hobbes disapproved of Elizabeth's handling of the bishops, suggesting that the inclusion of the language of *jure Divino* "untied the first knot" that prevented the people from exercising their own liberty in matters of conscience. While this may have been the ultimate result of Elizabeth's High Commission on heresy, Elizabeth's intent was to reduce the power of the bishops to interpret scripture with regard to the basic question of who should be punished for violations of Christian doctrine. Hobbes emphasizes this intent in his post-*Leviathan* writings, especially in the discussion of heresy in *A Dialogue*. According to the lawyer, Elizabeth's intent was to take the authority of judging heresy out of the hands of individual bishops, and instead "declare what should be heresie for the future; but with a restraint, that they should judge nothing to be heresie, but what had been so declared in the first four General Councils."<sup>112</sup> In other words, Elizabeth wanted to take the power of interpreting scripture away from the bishops by giving them all a standard definition of heresy that does not allow room for individual interpretive fancy.

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<sup>111</sup> *Leviathan*, IV.47.711.

<sup>112</sup> *A Dialogue*, p. 129.

A reiterates this in *Behemoth*, declaring that “the meaning of the word heresy is by law declared in an Act of Parliament in the first year of Queen Elizabeth.”<sup>113</sup> This implies there was no definition before Elizabeth’s reign. Of course, B rightly observes that the language of the definition still leaves significant room for interpretive fancy. The “high court of Parliament” has the authority to determine what is or is not a violation of the general councils or scripture.<sup>114</sup> Even more importantly, B wonders “who can tell what is declared by scripture, which every man is allowed to read and interpret to himself?”<sup>115</sup> Given that “divers Councils have declared a great many of our doctrines to be heresy,” depending on the interpretation of the councils’ intent, how can Constantine’s councils offer a better standard of what constitutes heresy than the subjective whims of the bishops? Turning back to *A Dialogue*, Hobbes did not seem concerned with declaring Constantine’s councils the standard for heresy as “not one man of ten thousand had ever read them, nor were they ever published in English.”<sup>116</sup> As far as definitions are concerned, Elizabeth’s definition of heresy left much to be desired. Nevertheless, the Queen at least attempted to consolidate her authority in spiritual matters, especially as to heresy, a spiritual crime that intersects with the temporal functions of sovereignty more acutely than any other spiritual crime. Hobbes’s only example showing the weakness of Elizabeth’s definition occurred in the reign of King James I, but the burning of

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<sup>113</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 9

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>116</sup> *A Dialogue*, p. 130.

Bartholomew Legat<sup>117</sup> only confirms what the characters in *A Dialogue* conclude about heresy: it is a matter that can only be “authorized by the King, the High Commission being long since abolished.”<sup>118</sup>

Although Elizabeth I is not mentioned in A’s explanation of the “two great virtues,” Hobbes’s characters in *Behemoth* praise Elizabeth for her ability to quell religious discontent through a combination of toleration, force, and legislation. Elizabeth’s definition of heresy may have been incomplete, but it did serve to maintain her authority in both temporal and spiritual matters during her reign. Like her predecessors William I, Henry VII, and Henry VIII, Elizabeth I governed according to the needs of the moment, using a combination of political and natural ability to ensure the safety and well-being of those under her dominion. Perhaps that is the best a sovereign can do, as the future is always uncertain. This does not imply, however, that sovereigns cannot learn from their predecessors who were particularly skillful in the art of rule. This is why Hobbes turns to historical case studies, so that sovereigns may “bear themselves prudently in the present and providently towards the future.”<sup>119</sup> Just as Hobbes emphasized the actions of Lord Monck, so too does he emphasize the virtues of the great English sovereigns of the past. Though Hobbes did not require historical case studies to prove his science, he nevertheless saw the utility of providing examples of sovereigns facing difficult challenges. The fact that these sovereigns were successful in maintaining

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., pp. 130-131.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>119</sup> See p. 149, note 19 in this chapter.

their sovereignties despite the challenges they faced testified to their skills as politicians as well as administrators, a testament Hobbes provides in his late career.

### Section 6: Hobbes's Assessment of Charles I

Although these historical sovereigns have a pedagogical function, the significance of these historical models of sovereign power goes beyond the anecdotal. As readers of Hobbes, we often assume that *Behemoth* is an unqualified defense of Charles I's reign. Hobbes's analysis of the causes and exacerbations of the conflict places the blame squarely on the shoulders of those Parliamentarians who opposed Charles I's strong monarchic rule. There is little doubt that Hobbes believed Charles I was a good man, but that is only if we define goodness in terms of "a man that wanted no virtue, of body or mind, nor endeavoured anything more than to discharge his duty towards God in the well governing of his subjects."<sup>120</sup>

This raises the question whether a good man is necessarily a good sovereign. For when we consider the difficulties that confronted William the Conqueror after his invasion of England, Charles I's difficulties seem minor by comparison. He was not the founder of a new dynasty in the same sense as Henry VII was, nor was he the founder of a new religion in the way that Henry VIII was. Yet each of these two Henrys had little difficulty raising funds, quelling discontent, and governing in the manner in which sovereigns need to govern to maintain order. Despite having considerable trouble with religious unrest throughout the commonwealth, Elizabeth I was able to control Parliament and the people in a way that eluded Charles I. Despite having considerable advantages

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<sup>120</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 2.

over his predecessors in what we might call political capital, Charles I would be unable to satisfy the most basic requirement of any sovereign, to protect the regime, because only by protecting the regime can the sovereign hope to protect the citizens.

Because Charles II was on the throne, Hobbes obviously could not offer an overt critique of Charles I. A strong and overt critique of Charles I might prevent Hobbes from gaining the royal approval he so desperately desired to have for his manuscript.

However, Hobbes's accounts of William I, Henry VII, Henry VIII, and Elizabeth I imply a critique of Charles I. Like his predecessors, Charles I faced religious factions, a lack of financial resources, a contentious Parliament, and challenges to his authority. Unlike his predecessors, Charles I would eventually lose his regime through civil war. Far from being "the best king perhaps that ever was,"<sup>121</sup> when examined in light of the sovereigns that were previously examined, Charles I seemed, at the very least, extremely vulnerable and, at the worst, extremely ill-suited to the task of maintaining the peace.

Part of this assessment can be attributed to how Charles I was unable to control, or at the very least govern with, Parliament. One difference between Hobbes's science and his dialogues is that the dialogues do not necessarily view a strong Parliament as bad. What constitutes bad government is not a strong monarch governing with a strong Parliament, but "divided power, in which there could be no peace."<sup>122</sup> Even if the Parliament has strong powers and prerogatives in its own right, this is not necessarily a problem if the sovereign is wise and skillful enough to use Parliament's powers and prerogatives to his advantage. In Hobbes's explanation of the origin of Parliament in *A*

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

*Dialogue*, the lawyer explains how “the Kings called together the Bishops, and a great part of the wisest and discreetest Men of the Realm” to make “laws by their advice.”<sup>123</sup>

The philosopher then describes how the creation of Parliament in no way harms the ability of the sovereign to govern, as “there is no King in the World, being of ripe years and sound mind, that had made any Law otherwise; for it concerns them in their own interest to make such Laws as the people can endure, and may keep them without impatience, and live in strength and courage to defend their King and Countrey, against their potent neighbours.”<sup>124</sup> It is important to consider here the phrase “of ripe years and sound mind,” as the philosopher is making the qualitative assessment that governing with Parliament does not weaken the ability of experienced and wise sovereigns to govern effectively. This statement also implies that governing with Parliament can be difficult for inexperienced or ignorant sovereigns. The danger is that the sovereign will fail to use Parliament when it ought to be used to pass “such Laws as the people can endure,” or that the sovereign will cede too much authority to Parliament, weakening his own ability to lead. This becomes extremely relevant when examining how Charles I interacted with Parliament, for it would seem that Charles I made the first error by failing to consult Parliament before sending the Book of Common Prayer into Scotland and failing to consult Parliament before levying the ship-money. He also made the second error by ceding too much of his authority to Parliament by granting assent to the various petitions, remonstrances, and legislation designed to strip him of his sovereign power in the years preceding the Civil War.

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<sup>123</sup> *A Dialogue*, p. 166.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

One such piece of legislation was the Triennial Act mandating the assembly of Parliament every three years with or without the king's approval. The motivation for Charles I's assent was examined in detail by the characters in *Behemoth*. Given that this is a weakening of Charles I's prerogative to call Parliament at will, B "cannot comprehend how any sovereign can well keep a people in order when his hands are tied, or when he hath any other obligation upon him than the benefit of those he governs."<sup>125</sup> A, however, is reluctant to offer an explanation for why Charles I gave up his power to call Parliament, but only offers B the procedure for calling a Parliament when the king is unwilling to do so. A describes how the responsibility would fall to the Lord Chancellor, and in the event the Lord Chancellor refused, the responsibility would fall unto "the Sheriffs of the several counties" in the event the sovereign refuses to call Parliament.<sup>126</sup> B sees a flaw in this arrangement, because "if the King, upon the refusal [to call Parliament], should fall upon them [those that would call Parliament in the king's absence] in his anger; who shall (the Parliament not sitting), protect either the Chancellor or the Sheriffs in their disobedience?"<sup>127</sup> A responds in a way that can only be seen as a plea to B: "I pray you do not ask me any reason of such things as I understand no better than you."<sup>128</sup> The reason this is a plea is because A knows the answer to B's question, but is reluctant to share what he knows. Perhaps the reason A does not want to answer B is that it brings into question whether Charles I is the "best king perhaps that ever

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<sup>125</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 73.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

was,<sup>129</sup> as it reveals a flaw that impedes Charles I's ability to make wise decisions.

After hearing of two other bills given assent by the king, B puts the state of Charles I's regime into perspective:

What a great progress made the Parliament towards their ends, or at least towards the ends of the most seditious Members of both Houses in so little time! They sat down in November, and now it was May; in this space of time, which is but half a year, they won from the King the adherence which was due to him from his people; they drove his faithfulest servants from him; beheaded the Earl of Strafford; imprisoned the Archbishop of Canterbury; obtained a triennial Parliament after their own dissolution, and a continuance of their own sitting as long as they listed: which last amounted to a total extinction of the King's right, in case that such a grant were valid; which I think it is not, unless the Sovereignty itself be in plain terms renounced, which it was not.<sup>130</sup>

After hearing A's account of additional concessions such as "the putting down [of] the Star-chamber and High-Commission Courts," B asks "what money, by way of subsidy or otherwise, did they grant the King, in recompense of all these his large concessions?"<sup>131</sup>

It is then that we discover the reason for Charles I's concessions, the reason A was reluctant to share before when B was questioning the wisdom of Charles I's decision.

"None at all; but" the Parliament "often promised they would make him the most glorious King that ever was in England; which were words that passed well enough for well meaning with the common people."<sup>132</sup>

Flattery, it would seem, was Charles I's undoing, but perhaps Charles I's susceptibility to flattery was more instrumental to his undoing. Instead of actually using

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., pp. 74-75.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 75.



the powers he had to serve the commonwealth, he was more apt to give his power away, perhaps in an attempt to appease the growing number of interests that were opposed to him. One can also see how Charles I could never adopt a middle course with Parliament and dealt with it in terms of extremes: consulting them too little when it was advantageous for him to do so, and allowing too much of his authority to fall into Parliament's hands in his attempt to appease it. Vainglory is not only a quality that is dangerous for citizens to possess, but it can also be dangerous when a sovereign's ambition outweighs his good sense. Therefore, Parliament might only possess, at best, half the blame for causing the undoing of Charles I.

We are now in a better position to understand why the historical monarchs were assessed by the characters in *Behemoth*. While all of them used their natural power to go beyond what the prescribed, they were also deferential to the institutions, customs, and the laws that underpinned the commonwealth whenever possible. However, this is not how Charles I viewed his relationship to the laws and the other authoritative institutions in the commonwealth. While Charles I is considered a good man, he also attempted to assert his royal prerogatives against the traditions that previous monarchs upheld: specifically the traditions that revolved around the role of Parliament in the monarchical system. What matters here is not whether Charles I had the right to govern without Parliament for over a decade or that the king had the right to levy the ship-money. *Behemoth's* A and B seem not to contest this point. However, by breaking conventions, Charles I gave "skillful hunters," like the Presbyterians and parliamentarians, "sufficient

ground for their purpose” of usurping the commonwealth for themselves.<sup>133</sup> While A hopes that a scientific understanding of duty will insulate the sovereign from such usurpations, it is difficult to expect subjects who are already intent “not to endure to hear of the King’s absolute power” to allow the sovereign much discretion to act contrary to long standing customs.<sup>134</sup>

What all the historically important English monarchs described in Hobbes’s dialogues share a willingness to defer, but not relinquish, their sovereign prerogatives when it was not necessary to use them. Although William the Conqueror by right had the authority to overturn all the Saxon customs in favor of Norman ones, “he did not innovate unnecessarily. . . . He granted to the English their own laws and he accepted with the kingdom the shire and hundred courts in which the English law ran.”<sup>135</sup> While Henry VII was by most accounts hungry for financial gain, he always went through Parliament to procure his funds and, by doing so, kept popular unrest at manageable levels. Despite Henry VIII’s reputation for exacting his will on the people, he worked closely with Parliament to procure the monasteries and administer his new church. Though Elizabeth I would not allow Parliament to undermine her constitutional authority, she allowed Parliament to pass laws and govern as it traditionally did. The deference to the laws displayed by these historical monarchs did in no way lower the praise given to them by Hobbes. On the contrary, Hobbes seemed to accept this deference as a political necessity.

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<sup>133</sup> *Behemoth*, pp. 36 and 37, respectively.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>135</sup> See Frank Barlow’s *William I and the Norman Conquest* (New York, NY: Collier Books, 1967), p. 119.

What these models of sovereign power show is that all sovereigns are not created equal. The ability of the sovereign to lead is not only a product of the institutional arrangements, but also a product of the personality and skill of the sovereign who fills the role. Implied in Hobbes's use of these historical models of sovereign power is a philosophy of leadership, one that goes beyond the limits of his science. The actual content of this philosophy of leadership will now be considered.

## CHAPTER VI

### HOBBS ON LEADERSHIP

#### **Section 1: Hobbes's Science on Questions of Leadership**

Evidence has been presented that shows some significant differences between the Hobbes we associate with the treatises and the Hobbes who wrote the dialogues. The form is perhaps the most obvious difference, and chapter II explained how dialectic helped Hobbes accomplish objectives that would be difficult to accomplish in treatise form. Specifically, dialectic is a form that allows a scholar to compare differing conceptions of the phenomena under investigation. This would be an ideal form for the philosopher who may be uncertain how to approach a subject, implying that Hobbes himself was uncertain that his science was complete. As definitive as Hobbes makes himself out to be in *Leviathan*, only a brief glance at Hobbes's career shows us that he continually refined his ideas. His science was continually developed from the philosophy as outlined in *The Elements of Law*, through *De Cive*, and eventually to *Leviathan*. What his treatises show us is that Hobbes always considered his philosophy as a work in progress that he continued to improve. Therefore, it would come as no surprise that Hobbes continued to refine his philosophy through his dialogues. What *is* surprising is the degree to which Hobbes is willing to consider perspectives in his dialogues that are antithetical to the teaching found in his treatises. Hobbes's scientific treatises identify memory, experience, and prudence as insufficient to understand man's political condition

and inadequate to discover solutions to the commonwealth's problems. In contrast, Hobbes's dialogues seem to point in the opposite direction: that memory, experience, and prudence can be sufficient, provided that there is a suitable example from which to draw such as the English Civil War. Perhaps the most important aspect of politics Hobbes's dialogues consider is political skill, an aspect of politics that is conspicuously absent in his treatises. The reason it is absent implies a limitation of Hobbes's science that the facts of the Restoration must have made clear to him.

While it is understood that Hobbes created his political science in the midst of the English Civil War, he could not have known the fate of his political science after it. In fact, Hobbes's political science would suffer several setbacks. Condemned by the most prominent scholars of his age, Hobbes's method and observations would not reach the widespread audience he anticipated. Not only was his political science never promulgated as was required, but it also seemed to fall short of a complete explanation of political phenomena. Specifically, Hobbes's science gives neither experience nor political skill much credit for solving political problems. This was problematic for Hobbes, and chapters III and IV show why. Simply put, the peace of the Restoration had more to do with experience and political skill than Hobbes originally assumed. The important experience was the observation of the tenacious ambition of Oliver Cromwell, a figure possessing absolute sovereign authority without understanding the responsibilities of such a position within the commonwealth. The important application of political skill was the observation of the skillful political maneuvering of Lord Monck, the pivotal figure that brought about the Restoration. The facts of the Restoration seemed

to imply that Hobbes's science could be better refined. Therefore, it is no surprise that, in his late career, he attempted to offer a more complete explanation of politics an explanation that went beyond what his science conveyed.

The fundamental aspect that was missing in Hobbes's science was something that it was not particularly suited to explain: particularity. His treatises were designed to discover those *general* inclinations that all human beings share: inclinations such as "a restless desire of Power after power, that ceaseth onely in Death."<sup>1</sup> *Peculiar* inclinations that human beings express as citizens, leaders, or peoples are significant only insofar as they demonstrate how unreliable a foundation for good order they prove themselves to be. This is part of the reason why Hobbes finds fault with the ancients. In Hobbes's view, the classical authors derived their knowledge of concepts like liberty "not from the Principles of Nature," but from the inherited practices "of their own Common-wealths, which were popular; as the Grammarians describe the Rules of Language, out of the Practice of the time; or the Rules of Poetry, out of the Poems of Homer and Virgil."<sup>2</sup> Examined in this way, the cultural particularities found within the commonwealth provide no solid basis for solving the problem of civil war. In fact, particularities are often the causes of disputes "both by the Pen and the Sword," as human beings "appeale from custome to reason, and from reason to custome, as it serves their turn; receding from the custome when their interest requires it, and setting themselves against reason, as

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<sup>1</sup> *Leviathan*, I.11.161.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, II.21.267

oft as reason is against them.”<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the greatest controversies caused by custom come in the form of legal precedents: laws that were traditionally understood to grant certain historically demonstrable privileges to the people that may run counter to the will of the sovereign. While Hobbes’s science grants that “the Subject hath the Liberty to demand the hearing of his Cause,”<sup>4</sup> the subject’s liberty to appeal to custom is not as important as the sovereign’s liberty to act against it. Seen in another way, the subject cannot use custom to override the sovereign’s authority, as “he that brings an action against the Sovereign, brings it against himself.”<sup>5</sup>

Particular qualities of sovereigns also cause discord, but not because the survival of the regime depends upon the sovereign’s virtues. The reason Hobbes’s science does not include a list of personal prerequisites for sovereigns is that it could be used to justify a rebellion against an otherwise lawful sovereign. Hobbes admits that human beings may be miserable under a peculiarly self-indulgent leader, “being obnoxious to the lusts, and other irregular passions of him, or them that have so unlimited a Power in their hands,” but notes that “all men are by nature provided of notable multiplying glasses . . . through which, every little payment appeareth a great grievance.”<sup>6</sup> Qualities that may be inconsequential or even beneficial all too often become pretexts for rebellion while a sovereign’s good qualities rarely—if ever—instill loyalty or deference.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., I.11.166.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., II.21.271

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., II.21.272.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., II.18.238-239.

Ultimately, Hobbes's science tells us that the qualities of the sovereign are less important for the stability of the regime than are the absolute powers and prerogatives of the sovereign: rights of the office that need to be both universally acknowledged and understood. While Hobbes admits that "men may fancy many evil consequences" from "so unlimited a Power" vested in the sovereign, he asserts that "the consequences of the want of it, which is perpetuall warre of every man against his neighbor, are much worse."<sup>7</sup> Hobbes's science conceived of sovereignty as an institution vested with various powers, rights, and responsibilities. It did not, however, delve very deeply into how sovereigns should *use* those powers, rights, and responsibilities. Questions concerning leadership show the limitations of Hobbes's science, for these questions are not answered by general conclusions derived from pure thought. In order to study leadership, one needs to study leaders: whether contemporary or historical; and in order to study leaders, one needs to study the times and the circumstances when the leaders ruled.

## **Section 2: Hobbes and Machiavelli on Method and Leadership**

The lack of discussion in Hobbes's scientific treatises of the traits that separate effective sovereigns from ineffective ones does not imply that a general theory of leadership is not possible. Machiavelli's political thought provides a good example of how an inquiry into leadership can deliver very applicable solutions to the problems leaders face. So compelling is Machiavelli's treatment of politics that he is sometimes called the first modern political scientist, preceding Hobbes's *Leviathan* by roughly 150

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., II.20.260.



years.<sup>8</sup> Included in his political thought is a robust conception of leadership: one that “dares to discuss and give rules for the governments of princes.”<sup>9</sup> In both *The Prince* and *The Discourses on Livy*, Machiavelli views leadership as a combination of the sovereign’s fortune (*fortuna*) and virtue (*virtù*), which in Machiavelli’s language indicates a kind of prudence, foresight, or political skill.<sup>10</sup> While fortune certainly plays a role in the success of regimes, Machiavelli was clearly of the mind that a sovereign who relied solely on the good fortune of his circumstance was in a dangerously vulnerable position. Machiavelli discovered that skill, not fortune, constituted the far greater factor that determined a sovereign’s success when governing.<sup>11</sup> Even when the people acknowledge the prince’s right to govern with absolute power, absolute power alone will

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<sup>8</sup> In his discussion of Hobbes’s modernity, Leo Strauss claims in *Natural Right and History* that “it was Machiavelli, that greater Columbus, who had discovered the continent on which Hobbes could erect his structure” (Strauss, 1953, p. 177). John Danford is in agreement with Strauss: that Machiavelli concluded that “the philosophy of the ancients was useless and must be entirely replaced,” and that “one can trace in Descartes and Hobbes precisely the same attitude and the same hopes.” See chapter 4, “Getting Our Bearings: Machiavelli and Hume,” in Paul Rahe’s *Machiavelli’s Liberal Republican Legacy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 105.

<sup>9</sup> See Niccolò Machiavelli’s dedicatory letter to Lorenzo de’ Medici taken from *The Prince*, Trans. Harvey Mansfield (Chicago: University Press, 1985), p. 4. Henceforth, this edition will be referred to as *The Prince*.

<sup>10</sup> In his introduction to *The Prince*, Harvey Mansfield interprets Machiavelli’s *virtù*, translated literally as “virtue,” as “a prudent or well-taught combination of vice and virtue in the old meaning” when he uses it to refer to political virtue (*The Prince*, introduction, p. xix). For Machiavelli, *virtù* has a common sense as Christian or classical virtue when talking about moral habits, but in a political sense, *virtù* includes what might be called vice in the classical or Christian context. This is because “if one considers everything well, one will find something appears to be virtue, which is pursued would be one’s ruin, and something else appears to be vice, which if pursued results in one’s security and well-being” (*The Prince*, ch. 15, p. 62). Therefore, when referring to political matters, Machiavelli’s *virtù* implies the ability to know when to practice those “qualities that are held good [in the classical sense],” but also to know when to practice “those vices [in the classical sense] without which it is difficult to save one’s state” (Ibid.).

<sup>11</sup> “And because the result of becoming prince from private individual presupposes either virtue [*virtù*] or fortune [*fortuna*], it appears that one or the other of these two things relieves in part many difficulties; nonetheless, he who has relied less on fortune has maintained himself more” (*The Prince*, ch. 6, p. 22).

not save a regime if the sovereign is not particularly skillful.<sup>12</sup> While Machiavelli does spend a considerable portion of *The Discourses* discussing the merits of various political offices, the actual scope and limitations of any political office are less important than the individual official who occupies it.<sup>13</sup> This is what makes Machiavelli's political thought *personality driven*, as it relies on the personal characteristics of the individuals who govern. In contrast, Hobbes's science as outlined in his political science treatises is *institutionally driven*. That is to say, the main aim of Hobbes's political science is to discern the correct powers, duties, and establishment of the political office of sovereign and all offices under the sovereign's jurisdiction. Hobbes's science is primarily designed to show how one should construct a government. It is—at best—only secondarily suited to be a philosophy of how to govern.

Nevertheless, there is enough similarity between Machiavelli's thought and Hobbes's science for scholars to place Hobbes in the Machiavellian tradition. Both thinkers possessed a generally negative view of human nature and neither thinker seemed to place much confidence in the science of the classical world. In order to understand

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<sup>12</sup> Here and elsewhere, Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy* shall refer to the Oxford Classics edition translated by Julia Conway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). Consider Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy* on the question of whether the people are wiser than a prince. Absolute power does not guarantee effective rule, as "a prince who is able to do what he wishes is mad, and a people that can do what it wishes is not wise." While it is to some disadvantage when a prince is "legally bound by the laws," such a circumstance is advantageous when used to limit the power of "evil princes" (*Discourses on Livy*, I.59.144). Note, however, that Machiavelli does not imply that all princes are necessarily evil, but "the good and wise ones," presumably the ones who are able to practice self-restraint, "have been few in number" (*Ibid.*, I.59.141).

<sup>13</sup> Consider Machiavelli's appraisal of the Roman tribunal in Book I, chapter 18: "this was a good institution while the citizens were good, because it has always been proper for anyone who understood the commonweal to be able to propose a law, and it is right for anyone to be able to express his opinion of it, so that the people, after hearing them all, is then able to select the best. But once the citizens became wicked this institution became very harmful, because only the powerful proposed laws, not in the name of common freedom but for the benefit of their own authority" (*Discourses on Livy*, I.18.69).

this similarity, it is best to contrast this classical science of the ancients with Machiavelli's political thought and Hobbes's modern science. For a philosopher like Aristotle, political science begins by understanding what the objects of concern for politics are. What Aristotle soon discovers is that the objects of concern for politics (virtue, happiness, goodness, and the like) are loaded with meaning and that the meaning will vary among individual human beings. Therefore, Aristotle believed that the appropriate way to understand the objects of concern for politics is to proceed "from things which are familiar relative to us" working from commonly held opinions about the object in question.<sup>14</sup> Since inquiring about the ends of politics requires some experience with those ends, Aristotle naturally assumes that his audience is already "brought up well in ethical habits."<sup>15</sup> Understanding the objects of concern for politics in this way, Aristotle then proceeds to examine how human beings can attain those objects within the constraints that nature allows. A good example of Aristotle's method can be seen in how he explains virtue in *Nicomachean Ethics*. He explains that virtue is neither naturally acquired nor unnatural to acquire, but is nevertheless subject to natural constraints; for "it is in the nature of such things to be destroyed by deficiency as well as excess."<sup>16</sup>

Machiavelli and Hobbes, however, do not start from the place from which Aristotle starts. While Aristotle starts from the objects of concern for politics, both Machiavelli and Hobbes start from a place that they believe is more fundamental than the

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<sup>14</sup> See Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Hippocrates Apostle (Grinnell, IA: Peripatetic Press, 1975), p. 4, 1095b3-5.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 1095b4-6.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 23, 1104a12-13.

objects of concern for politics. Like most modern philosophers, they start from what they conceive are the natural or the pre-political conditions of man. Machiavelli and Hobbes can do this because they do not assume that human beings are political animals by nature as Aristotle assumed. Instead, Machiavelli and Hobbes start from the standpoint that human beings become political out of convenience and not necessarily because it is in their nature to live in a political community.<sup>17</sup> After describing the natural conditions human beings are under in a state of nature, both Machiavelli and Hobbes discover what the objects of concern for politics may be. That is to say, the place where Aristotle starts his inquiry (the object of concern for politics) comes later in Machiavelli's and Hobbes's respective inquiries only after they have established the natural condition in which human beings find themselves. Conversely, the place where Machiavelli and Hobbes begin their respective inquiries (natural constraint) comes later in Aristotle's inquiry only after Aristotle establishes the objects of concern for politics.

The nature both Machiavelli and Hobbes start from is not orderly and rational, but chaotic and hostile. We can see this in Machiavelli's discussion of fortune early on in *The Prince*. He starts his discussion of human nature by offering up an example of how human nature runs contrary to the reality of the natural order: "that men willingly change their masters in the belief that they will fare better" but "they are deceived because they

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<sup>17</sup> Consider Machiavelli's first chapter in *Discourses on Livy* where he describes the origin of cities: "inhabitants, scattered in many small groups, feel they are not living in security, since each small group on its own . . . cannot resist the onslaught of anyone who may attack it" (*Discourses on Livy*, I.I.19). Cf. *Leviathan*, II.17.227-228: "For by this Authoritie, given him by every particular man in the Commonwealth, he hath the use of so much Power and Strength conferred on him, that by terror thereof, he is inabled to forme the wills of them all, to Peace at hime, and mutuall ayd against their enemies abroad."

see later by experience that they have done worse.”<sup>18</sup> The reason human beings make this mistake is because they do not respect fortune: “for time sweeps everything before it and can bring with it good as well as evil and evil as well as good.”<sup>19</sup> Far from living in harmony with nature, mankind is constantly tested and tried by a malevolent natural order, one in which *Fortuna* “shows her power where virtue has not been put into good order to resist her and therefore turns her impetus where she knows that dams and dikes have not been made to contain her.”<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, Hobbes describes the difficulties human beings face “not only to the procuring, but also to the assuring of a contented life.”<sup>21</sup> Like Machiavelli, Hobbes describes a natural order that can guarantee no future certainty, and therefore man “cannot assure the power and means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more.”<sup>22</sup> This naturally leads individuals into conflict, making Hobbes’s state of nature synonymous with a state of war.<sup>23</sup> Just as Machiavelli and Hobbes have similar views of mankind’s relationship with nature, so too do they have a similar understanding of the objective of politics: nothing more and nothing less than security against the uncertainty found in the natural order. What Machiavelli and Hobbes share is

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<sup>18</sup> *The Prince*, ch. 3, p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>21</sup> *Leviathan*, I.11.161.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, “Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man against every man” I.13.185.

a belief that human beings cannot ever hope to live in harmony with nature. Instead, the only way human beings can ever hope to live prosperous, long, and fulfilling lives is to harness the collective power of individuals into a body politic for the purpose of mastering nature and all the uncertainty nature represents. In this respect, both Machiavelli and Hobbes can be considered political thinkers that are cut from the same modern cloth.

It is tempting to claim that Hobbes was influenced or inspired by Machiavelli. However, it would be premature to assume that Hobbes's political science is a successor to Machiavelli's political thought. We know that Machiavelli's writings were available in England in Hobbes's time, as James Harrington refers to him extensively in his *Oceana*.<sup>24</sup> We also know that Hobbes's predecessor Francis Bacon was deeply influenced by Machiavelli, and Bacon's appreciation for Machiavelli's clarity in explaining "what men do, and not what they ought to do" can be seen in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*.<sup>25</sup> However, the fact that Hobbes does not mention Machiavelli in any of his works or correspondence means that any association between the two thinkers is a matter of conjecture. Hobbes certainly had the opportunity to study Machiavelli. In the late 1620's, Hobbes was asked by Lord Cavendish to take an inventory of all the books in the library at Hardwick Hall, the library Hobbes used in his secretarial period. The list indicates that the library contained Machiavelli's *Florentine*

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<sup>24</sup> See above in chapter III, pp. 86-87.

<sup>25</sup> See Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* II.xxi.9, online edition courtesy of The University of Adelaide Library (2004) at <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/b/bacon/francis/b12a/complete.html#preface2>.

*Histories* and *Discourses on Livy*, both works translated into English.<sup>26</sup> Whether or not Hobbes actually read the books is another matter, but the library contained more than works by Machiavelli. It contained a large number of works from authors who discuss Machiavelli, most notably Giovanni Botero, and works from many other Italian authors procured during Hobbes's trip to Venice alongside Cavendish around 1614.<sup>27</sup> Given the materials available to Hobbes in his early years as a tutor and scholar, it would seem highly unlikely that Hobbes would not have had at least a second hand account of Machiavelli's thought. Yet the fact that Hobbes had access to Machiavelli's thought raises an interesting question; if it is true that Hobbes knew something of Machiavelli's writings and their impact on many of the leading figures in political thought, why is there no mention of Machiavelli in Hobbes's works?

While the similarities between Machiavelli and Hobbes have been explored, there are also great differences between the two thinkers. The primary difference is one of method. Hobbes started his career as a student of the classics and a translator of Thucydides. Later, Hobbes started to question the value of ancient political thought. His critique of classical methods has previously been explored, but is perhaps best summed up in chapter 4 of *Leviathan*: that "words are wise mens counters, they do but reckon by them: but they are the mony of fooles, that value them by the authority of an *Aristotle*, a *Cicero*, or a *Thomas*, or any other doctor whatsoever, if but a man."<sup>28</sup> In other words, the

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<sup>26</sup> See Noel Malcom's *Reason of State, Propaganda, and the Thirty Years' War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 109.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> *Leviathan*, I.4.106.

practice of political philosophy had become mere recitation of the words and wisdom of previous philosophers with little thought as to whether the words and wisdom can be applied in new circumstances. Although the ancients took experience and prudence as wisdom, Hobbes insists that “such conjecture, through the difficulty of observing all circumstances, be very fallacious.”<sup>29</sup> That is to say, the wisdom gained from experience may, in fact, be of little consequence in solving present problems. What is needed is a knowledge of more than particular circumstances, but a “knowledge of consequences”<sup>30</sup> that is true regardless of whatever particular historical circumstance presents itself. Such knowledge is not gained through history or experience, but only through the application of a rigorous method “attained by Industry”: one that systematically builds a model of human and political behavior.<sup>31</sup> This model is not designed to explain the real world as much as it is designed to show how to produce a desired outcome.<sup>32</sup>

Machiavelli’s thought was not systematically presented in the same way Hobbes’s science was, and he did not consider himself a modern scientist in the same way as Hobbes did. Machiavelli did not believe that human nature or politics was a science based on ratiocination, but an historical discipline that understood how the circumstances of the present are similar or different from those of the past. Solving political problems comes only from a shrewd understanding of the particular circumstances of the times: “he

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., I.3.97.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., I.5.115.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> See Watkins (1965), “Hobbes saw the main task of the natural philosopher to be, not the discovery of principles (these being, for Hobbes, already sufficiently known), but the devising of hypothetical models showing how various natural phenomena may be produced” (p. 63).



is prosperous who adapts his mode of proceeding to the qualities of the times; and similarly, he is unprosperous whose procedure is in disaccord with the times.”<sup>33</sup> In Machiavelli’s estimation there is no single general solution to every political problem that may appear, but instead, only better or worse solutions based upon the circumstances. To use Hobbes’s (and Bishop Bramhall’s) language, politics resembles “tennis play” more than it resembles geometry.<sup>34</sup> History and prudence can provide the person who consults them an advantage, but in order to understand what history teaches, one must possess an experience with present circumstances alongside an intimate knowledge of past circumstances, noting carefully the differences between the two. The Epistle Dedicatory for *The Prince* explains this standard, and Machiavelli’s “long experience with modern things and a continuous reading of ancient ones” is what qualifies him to give advice to Lorenzo de’Medici.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, experience, prudence, and history—all of the sources of wisdom rejected by Hobbes’s science—provide the keys to political wisdom in Machiavelli’s political thought. In this sense, the method Machiavelli uses to discern political wisdom appears far more dated than Hobbes’s method, and it is in this respect that Machiavelli saw himself more as a successor to the classical tradition than as an opponent of it.

While noting the radically modern way Machiavelli and Hobbes approached political questions, it remains to be asked whether Machiavelli himself believed that he

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<sup>33</sup> *The Prince*, ch. 25, p. 99.

<sup>34</sup> See above in chapter I, pp. 39-40.

<sup>35</sup> *The Prince*, Dedicatory Letter, p. 3.

was overturning the classical tradition. Although Machiavelli saw his work as entering “upon a path still untrodden,”<sup>36</sup> it is less clear whether this statement implies that Machiavelli was engaged in a *repudiation* of classical political thought or a *reappraisal* of classical political thought. As far as classical political thought is associated with the classical philosophical tradition found in Plato’s dialogues and Aristotle’s treatises, we could say that Machiavelli was engaged in a repudiation of classical political philosophy. However, it is far from clear that classical political *thought*, generally speaking, is synonymous with classical political *philosophy* in the form of Plato’s dialogues and Aristotle’s treatises. In fact, there is little evidence that Machiavelli even read the philosophies of Plato or Aristotle or felt that it was necessary to consult their works for an understanding of ancient political practices. As Friedrich Nietzsche explained, one can still have a classical perspective and ultimately reject the applicability of the Socratic tradition to that perspective. In fact, Nietzsche would argue that one cannot truly understand the ancient mind *without* rejecting the tenets of the Socratic tradition altogether. For Nietzsche, Plato was more of a critic of ancient political thought than an example of it, as he had “deviated so far from all the fundamental instincts of the Hellenes,” that he can no longer be considered an exemplar of Hellenic practice.<sup>37</sup> This is why Nietzsche viewed Machiavelli as a kind of modern Thucydides who possessed an accurate perspective on the classical political tradition. In Nietzsche’s estimation, Machiavelli possessed an “unconditional will not to deceive” himself “and not to see

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<sup>36</sup> *Discourses on Livy*, preface (autographed manuscript), p. 15.

<sup>37</sup> Taken from R. J. Hollingdale’s translation of Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Twilight of the Idols* (London, UK: Penguin Group, 1990), p. 117.

reason in reality—not in ‘reason’, still less in ‘morality’,” and this perspective truly encapsulates “that strong, stern, hard matter-of-factness instinctive to the older Hellenes.”<sup>38</sup>

Unlike Hobbes, Machiavelli believed that the ancients had something to teach us. This is verified by a claim made in his preface to *The Discourses on Livy* when he faults his own time for “not possessing a true understanding of the histories, so that in reading them, we fail . . . to taste that flavor they intrinsically possess.”<sup>39</sup> In a letter to his friend Francesco Vettori, Machiavelli viewed himself as an ally and even a successor to the ancients. He explains how in his study, Machiavelli enters “the ancient courts of ancient men, where, received by them lovingly, I feed on the food that alone is mine and that I was born for. There I am not ashamed to speak with them and to ask them the reason for their actions; and they in their humanity reply to me.”<sup>40</sup> What this letter shows is that Machiavelli believed that he understood the ancients as they understood themselves, and not through the lens of the moral philosophers who were more preoccupied with “republics and principalities that have never been seen or known to exist.”<sup>41</sup> The knowledge he uncovered from the ancients revealed the true lessons of ancient political practice, lessons that have to do with the actions of great men such as Cyrus, Alexander,

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>39</sup> *Discourses on Livy*, Preface to the Autographed Manuscript, p. 16.

<sup>40</sup> Letter to Francesco Vettori (December 10, 1513) taken from *The Prince*, pp. 109-110.

<sup>41</sup> *The Prince*, ch. 15, p. 61. It is possible that Machiavelli intended this statement to be humorous. In chapter 17 of *The Prince*, Machiavelli returns to a discussion of Scipio’s virtues. After considering the rebellion of Scipio’s troops, Machiavelli concluded that “this arose from nothing but his [Scipio’s] excessive mercy, which had allowed his soldiers more license than is fitting for military discipline.” See *ibid.*, ch. 17, p. 68.

Cincinnatus, and others. The actions of these ancient leaders provide valuable insight into the questions of effective political rule, and this is how Machiavelli saw himself as a successor to the ancients even though his philosophy bears little resemblance to Plato's dialogues or Aristotle's treatises.<sup>42</sup>

Although his works break from the classical political tradition, Machiavelli acknowledges that the ancient sources offer valuable lessons, specifically with respect to leadership. Rather than take his bearings from the ancient philosophers, Machiavelli formulates his opinion of the ancients from the classical historians: primarily Livy among the Romans and Xenophon among the Greeks and, to a lesser extent, Tacitus, Polybius, and Plutarch. These sources provide access to the lives and practices of the great leaders from antiquity, and Machiavelli urges his readers to continue their study by reading these classical authors. A good example of this is his advice for the education of princes in chapter 14 of *The Prince*. Regarding "the exercise of the mind," Machiavelli offered the example of Scipio Africanus, and suggests that princes "should read the histories and consider in them the actions of excellent men," for "whoever reads the life of Cyrus written by Xenophon will then recognize in the life of Scipio how much glory that imitation brought him, how much in chastity, affability, humanity, and liberality Scipio conformed to what had been written of Cyrus by Xenophon."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> "I shall boldly proclaim in an open way what I understand of ancient times and of our own, so that the minds of the young men who will read these writings of mine can avoid the errors of the present and be prepared to imitate the past whenever fortune provides them with the proper occasion" (*Discourses on Livy*, preface to Book II, p. 152).

<sup>43</sup> *The Prince*, ch. 14, p. 60.

For Machiavelli, the secrets of politics are understood by understanding “the paths beaten by great men,”<sup>44</sup> and therefore, Machiavelli’s political thought depends upon understanding concrete examples of leaders in action. When Machiavelli offers a general rule it is usually after a detailed description of an historical event or personality. For example, Machiavelli concludes that princes “begin to lose the state the moment they begin to break the laws and those ways and customs that are ancient” from the example of Tarquin the Proud’s indifference towards the rape of Lucretia.<sup>45</sup> For Machiavelli, specific examples, not ratiocination, provide the means of understanding general truths.

In contrast, Hobbes’s science does not use historical examples to underpin its scientific understanding of politics. While he did use historical evidence occasionally to illustrate his science,<sup>46</sup> he was more inclined to use thought experiments and analogies to demonstrate his more difficult concepts. An example of this can be seen when Hobbes compares the relative restriction of liberty to “water shut up in a vessel” in chapter IX of *De Cive*. Just as “water shut up in a vessel is therefore not at liberty, because the vessel hinders it from running out,” so too does “every man hath more or lesse liberty, as he

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., ch. 6, p. 22.

<sup>45</sup> *Discourses on Livy*, vol. II, ch. 5, p. 255.

<sup>46</sup> Hobbes does refer to some historical examples, typically from antiquity or the Bible, to illustrate some of his concepts. An example would be in chapter VII of *De Cive* when Hobbes refers to the Roman institution of Dictatorship in the time of the second Punic War. He does this to illustrate how a temporary monarch is nothing more than “the Prime Officer of the people” who is able to be divested of authority as the people see fit. As evidence of this, Hobbes refers to Livy’s account when the people of Rome gave Minucius Rufus the authority of Master of the Horse, despite the fact that Fabius Maximus was already made Dictator some time before. See *De Cive*, VII.16.114. However, it should be noted that Hobbes uses this example to illustrate the concepts he had previously discerned from ratiocination. He did not use history in the creation of his science, but he did use it on occasion to illustrate his science.

hath more or lesse space in which he employes himself.”<sup>47</sup> For Hobbes, political science is not an exercise in deriving political truths from historical examples. It is, as we have seen, the rigorous application of a method of reasoning similar to that of a mathematician methodically establishing a geometric proof. Perhaps if Hobbes believed that political science was a science of leadership, he would be more inclined to use history to discern those mechanisms by which exceptional leaders govern. However, Hobbes’s science did not aim at understanding exceptional cases as much as it was aimed at providing a generalizable theory of human nature.

This difference in aim between Machiavelli’s thought and Hobbes’s science has ramifications for how each thinker solves political problems in his respective works. Although both thinkers agree that the objective of politics is to provide security against the unpredictability of nature, each thinker has a different view as to how this security is provided. The differences can be illustrated by examining the method by which a disparate people become a body politic. For Machiavelli, the creation of a body politic is accomplished by the founder, a rare individual of considerable talent who can master fortune even at its worst. In *The Prince*, founders are described as princes who, “by the paths of virtue,” introduce “with difficulty ... new orders and modes.”<sup>48</sup> This reliance on the virtue of a single founder for the regime’s lasting stability is not a feature of principalities only. In *The Discourses on Livy*, Machiavelli maintains that even in the case of a republic, the success or failure of the regime is dependent on the virtue of the

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., IX.9.125.

<sup>48</sup> *The Prince*, ch. 6, p. 23.

founder as “it is necessary for a single man to be the one who gives it shape, and from whose mind any such organization derives.”<sup>49</sup> Expansion of a regime through conquest aside,<sup>50</sup> Machiavelli’s conception of founding relies upon the exceptional skill of an exceptional individual.

This is not the conception of founding in Hobbes’s science. There is no founder figure that establishes the regime,<sup>51</sup> but a collection of individuals who “conferre all their power and strength upon one Man, or upon one Assembly of men.”<sup>52</sup> There is comparatively little discussion on whether virtue, skill in governing, skill in lawmaking, skill in arms, or experience are factors that determine the success or longevity of the regime. Instead, the factors that determine the success of a regime have to do with the presence of whatever institutional arrangements are conducive to political stability. It would seem as if Sheldon Wolin’s observation about Hobbes was correct, that despite the

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<sup>49</sup> *Discourses on Livy*, I, ch. 9, p. 45.

<sup>50</sup> Both Machiavelli and Hobbes believe that the acquisition of a regime through conquest is an alternative means by which a commonwealth may come to be governed by a new sovereign. However, this is not a true founding, because the conqueror acquires a body politic that is already in place.

<sup>51</sup> It is possible to conceive of the scientist as a possible founder figure in Hobbes’s thought. As Kraynak observes, “a new class of intellectuals is created” by Hobbes’s thought “who, abandoning the goal of disinterested theory, are to become the agents of radical change by reshaping the minds of the people” (Kraynak 1990, p. 191). This view is consistent with the statement Hobbes makes in chapter 29 of *Leviathan* that human beings are “makers, and orderers” of reality, separate from their capacity as mere “matter” (*Leviathan*, II.29.363). In this sense, Hobbes’s “very able architect” is not the sovereign as much as it is the philosopher who justifies the sovereign’s right to rule. This notion of the founder as a philosopher, however, would be rejected by Machiavelli for the simple fact that the founder must have access to force of arms, for “Moses, Cyrus, Theseus, and Romulus would not have been able to make their peoples observe their constitutions for long if they had been unarmed.” See *The Prince*, ch.6, p. 24.

<sup>52</sup> *Leviathan*, II.17.227.

awesome power Hobbes allows the sovereign, “no extended discussion is to be found concerning the education or moral qualities necessary to the exercise of sovereignty.”<sup>53</sup>

Wolin also observed that Hobbes did not always believe political theory should be devoid of any discussion about the sovereign’s personal qualities. In observing Hobbes’s Epistle Dedicatory for his translation of Thucydides, Wolin saw that Hobbes “recommended Thucydides ‘as having . . . profitable instructions for noblemen, and such as may come to have the managing of great and weighty actions.’”<sup>54</sup> It was only later that “Hobbes changed his mind about the value of history, contrasting the fallibility of prudence and experience derived from the knowledge of past events with the ‘infallible rules’ and ‘prospective glasses’ of political philosophy.”<sup>55</sup> Hobbes’s science as stated in *The Elements of Law*, *De Cive*, and *Leviathan* was for Wolin an attempt to replace the political heroes found in the histories with a “new paradigm of the hero, incarnated in Galileo and Kepler” showing “what marvels the human mind might achieve if it dared to renounce the past and rely on no authority save human reason.”<sup>56</sup> In Hobbes’s science, statecraft is a job for the scientist. It is not a job for the statesman.

Hobbes’s Epistle Dedicatory from his translation of Thucydides *does* show us that he placed a greater emphasis on the education of leaders in his early career than he would in the middle part of his career. A wealth of new evidence from Hobbes’s early career only reaffirms this conclusion. While the introduction to Hobbes’s translation of

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<sup>53</sup> Wolin (1970), p. 28.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 19.



Thucydides was discussed in the last chapter, Hobbes wrote additional works during his service with William Cavendish, first Earl of Newcastle. Three of these works can be found in Cavendish's *Horae Subsecivae* published in 1620.<sup>57</sup> Another work of Hobbes during this period is a translation of the *Altera secretissima instructo* (the second secret instruction) from 1626.<sup>58</sup> What is special about these four texts is that they all contain some discussion about political skill, a topic that is barely discussed in Hobbes's scientific treatises.

### Section 3: Hobbes's Machiavellian Return

*Altera secretissima instructo* was not composed by Hobbes, but it was translated by Hobbes into English around 1627.<sup>59</sup> The pamphlet was an example of a body of popular literature that depicted "the sort of thing that might be discussed in the most secret deliberations of princes and their counselors."<sup>60</sup> Like most of the political pamphlets at the time, the advice given in the pamphlet "borders between fact and fiction,

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<sup>57</sup> Three discourses in the *Horae Subsecivae* (*A Discourse on the Beginning of Tacitus, A Discourse of Rome, and A Discourse on Laws*) were linked to Thomas Hobbes. The method used to link these discourses to Hobbes was statistical wordprint analysis: an empirical method that compares word patterns found in the *Horae Subsecivae* with word patterns from texts that are known to be written by Hobbes. The results lead Noel Reynolds and Arlene Saxonhouse to conclude that the three discourses in the *Horae Subsecivae* "definitely have noncontextual word-patterns identical to those in Hobbes's writings." See Reynolds's and Saxonhouse's "Hobbes and the *Horae Subsecivae*" in their edition of *Three Discourses*, p. 19.

<sup>58</sup> Noel Malcolm links the English translation of the *Altera secretissima instructo* to Hobbes through handwriting analysis. He compares the *Altera secretissima instructo* to the Hardwick library catalogue known to have been written in Hobbes's hand. Malcolm's comparison of the letter forms leads him to conclude that "all the letter-shapes found in the translation, including some very characteristic capital letters, recur" in the translation of the *Altera secretissima instructo*. See Malcolm (2007), pp. 16-17, and note 2, pp. 16-17.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

between genuine analysis and satirical exaggeration.”<sup>61</sup> In the case of the *Altera secretissima instructo*, the text depicts one of the advisors to the Elector Palatine of the Rhine, Frederick V, who was also married to the sister of Charles I and a member of the Protestant Union during the Thirty Years’ War. The pamphlet depicts advice that is similar to the advice given by Machiavelli and other writers from what has been called the “reason of state” tradition.<sup>62</sup> What is interesting is that this text says nothing about science as the solution to Frederick V’s political problems, the duty of securing *salus populi*, or vainglory as a destructive force. It instead discusses political strategy, encouraging Frederick V to be ambitious for power and conquest.

The pamphlet starts by analyzing the disposition of all the nations of Europe towards the Elector Palatine in 1626. It is divided into two parts: what the Elector Palatine “cannot do” followed by what he “can.”<sup>63</sup> The section on what Frederick V cannot do primarily consists of an assessment of the various nations of Europe with respect to domestic politics, military strength, alliances, wars, and disposition towards the Palatine region. The first nation described is England under Charles I. Hobbes describes Charles I as “weary of war;” his empty treasury, indemnities towards Norway, and conflicts within his own kingdom make Charles I unwilling to enter into a military

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>62</sup> The term *ragion di stato* (reason of state) was first formally used by Giovanni Botero in 1589. However, the actual tradition “already enjoyed wide currency” before 1589. According to Noel Malcolm, reason of state “was associated with Machiavellianism and Tacitism; and it was used to account for political actions that were, on the face of it, contrary to ‘Divine Law’ or morality” (ibid., p. 92).

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., pp. 131-132.

alliance with Palatine.<sup>64</sup> After describing the political situation of England and the rest of Europe, the author concludes that Frederick V's "hope depends on other mens ayde, in which there be two things doubtfull, their *Will* and their *Power*."<sup>65</sup> Therefore, the Elector Palatine must rely on his own resources. The author then uses the example of Caesar, showing how one does not need allies if one possesses "strength and soldiers."<sup>66</sup> Considering the fact that the Elector Palatine is weak militarily, the author then suggests deception; for "when y<sup>e</sup> Lions skin is worne out, put on the Foxes case."<sup>67</sup> When reading this advice, one cannot help but be reminded of Machiavelli's famous statement in *The Prince* concerning the lion and the fox, for "since a prince is compelled of necessity to know well how to use the beast, he should pick the fox and the lion, because the lion does not defend itself from snares and the fox does not defend itself from wolves."<sup>68</sup> While Machiavelli is not mentioned in the work, the *Altera secretissima instructio* is a

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<sup>64</sup> "He is weary of warre. His Kingdome is exhausted, his treasury empty, sauinge towards Norway, that way indeed there is much owinge. The nobility detest warre, cry out for peace, deny and deny againe to giue any mony. The Lords deny, the Londoners sweare they haue it not, and would be rid of the opportunity w<sup>th</sup> giuinge 20000 pound. At home, there is feare of themselves, disagreement w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> kinge, and disposing of Garrisons" (ibid., pp. 135-136).

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 168. It should be noted here that Hobbes wrote the word "power" in capitals, where it was originally in lower case in the original. Therefore, it seems likely that Hobbes wanted to emphasize that power or lack of power was a significant consideration in the assessment of leaders.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>68</sup> *The Prince*, ch. 18, p. 69. It should be noted that Machiavelli was not the first to use the analogy of the fox and the lion in this way. Both Cicero and Plutarch also used this analogy. In *De Officiis*, Cicero admits that "while wrong may be done, then, in either of two ways, that is, by force or by fraud, both are bestial: fraud seems to belong to the cunning fox, force to the lion; both are wholly unworthy of man, but fraud is the more contemptible." In Plutarch's *Lives*, Lysander "laughed at those who insisted that the decedents of Heracles [the Spartiates] should not stoop to trickery in warfare and remarked, 'Where the lion's skin will not reach, we must patch it out with the fox's.'" See *On Duties*, trans. Walter Miller (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classics, 1913), bk. 1, ch. 13, §41, p. 45; and *Nine Greek Lives*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1960), ch. 9, §7, p. 293, respectively.

Machiavellian work that applies historical wisdom to the subject of effective leadership. It shows Hobbes's link to the ideas and thinkers of the previous reason of state tradition: a tradition that included Machiavelli and ancient authors such as Tacitus. It is not, however, the only work by Hobbes that uses historical wisdom in this way.

Three chapters in Cavendish's *Horae Subsecivae* are also attributed to Hobbes: *A Discourse on Rome*, *A Discourse on Laws*, and *A Discourse upon the Beginning of Tacitus*. His *Discourse on Rome* is a collection of thoughts from his trip to Rome alongside Cavendish and offers some reflections on the value of honor and virtue. When Hobbes sees the natural harshness of the Roman lands, he wonders "how the inhabitants of so wild a place could ever come to such greatness."<sup>69</sup> He concludes that the harshness must have disposed the Roman people towards virtue and self-discipline, and conversely, "that ease and delicacy of life is the bane of noble actions."<sup>70</sup> This does not necessarily mean that human beings do not act at all when conditions are pleasant, but that they tend to "not apprehend anything farther than the compass of their own affections;"<sup>71</sup> meaning that they place their private pleasures before the public good.

Harsh conditions provide human beings an incentive to make life better. Arlene Saxonhouse views this principle found in *A Discourse on Rome* as the reason why Hobbes felt it was necessary to describe the state of nature in such harsh terms in his

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<sup>69</sup> *Three Discourses*, p. 73.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

more scientific writings.<sup>72</sup> Hobbes, however, seems to be making a kind of argument in the *Discourse on Rome* from the argument he is making in *Leviathan* or elsewhere in his scientific treatises. His science puts forth a conception of human nature that is radically individualist. In this view, human beings enter into a covenant for reasons of personal gain. As Macpherson observed, “Hobbes saw no evidence that any principle of obligation based on something beyond self-interest was likely to be more widely and firmly accepted than one based on self-interest.”<sup>73</sup> Whether in response to the fear of death or the result of rational calculation, human beings in Hobbes’s science enter into political communities out of self-interested motives. In other words, individuals are publically inclined only insofar as they receive a private benefit. Therefore, public virtue in Hobbes’s science—if we are to call it that—is limited to the bare minimum requirements to maintain security: obedience to the laws, deference to the sovereign’s judgment, and commodious living. It does not include actions that we traditionally associate with public virtue such as military service.<sup>74</sup> Citizens in Hobbes’s science are not expected to carry out public functions; and this is why they authorize a sovereign to perform the public functions on their behalf.

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<sup>72</sup> “One way to read Hobbes’s mature political theory is to think of it as encouraging all to engage in an intellectual exercise that reminds us of what we have too casually forgotten: the nasty and brutish natural condition of mankind is like the harsh topography around Rome, an incentive to action, an incentive to the ambition to ameliorate the discomfort through political foundings.” See Saxonhouse’s essay “Hobbes and Modern Political Theory” at the end of *Three Discourses*, p. 144.

<sup>73</sup> See C.B. Macpherson’s *Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (1962), p. 73.

<sup>74</sup> For example, military service is not seen as a public duty the citizen is required to undertake; for “a man that is commanded as a Souldier to fight against the enemy, though his Sovereign have Right enough to punish his refusal with death, may nevertheless in many cases refuse, without Injustice” (*Leviathan* II.31.269).

In *A Discourse on Rome*, however, Hobbes clearly distinguishes between private and public motivations. What made Rome great was not that the people gave themselves over “to an easeful life.”<sup>75</sup> The poverty of the territory could not allow a man to be “confined to his own particular interest, and looking no further.”<sup>76</sup> Instead, the impoverished circumstances created a “will to prevail for the public” so that the Roman people could “go on in actions of greater consequence and more difficulty.”<sup>77</sup> Hobbes makes an assertion in *A Discourse on Rome* that we might describe as communitarian or republican: that “no man is born only for himself,” and consequently, man cannot expect to achieve greatness by devoting himself to private affairs alone.<sup>78</sup> The Romans understood this notion and made an effort to preserve those actions worthy of recognition in their monuments. Hobbes noticed how the statues “do strangely immortalize” the fame of those Romans “whose virtue, more than their greatness, made them famous.”<sup>79</sup> This pursuit of immortal glory through monumental architecture was considered by Hobbes as part of the reason for Rome’s success, for “not knowing any farther immortality, these were they, and this one consideration produced better effects of virtue and valor, than Religion, and all other respects do in our days.”<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> *Three Discourses*, p. 74.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

Machiavelli makes similar arguments in *Discourses on Livy*. He agrees with Hobbes that if one wants to ensure that the people act virtuously, “it is preferable to select barren sites, so that men, forced to work industriously and less occupied in idle pursuits, will live more united, having less reason for disagreements because of the poverty of the site.”<sup>81</sup> He disagrees with Hobbes that Rome was situated on such an impoverished site. Instead, Machiavelli traced the origin of the public virtue displayed by Rome to the “many necessities imposed upon this city by Romulus, Numa, and the others, so that the fertility of the site, the convenience of the sea, the frequent victories, and the great size of its empire were unable to corrupt it for centuries, and these laws kept it full of as much exceptional ability as ever adorned any other city or republic.”<sup>82</sup> For Machiavelli the strictness of the laws—not the harshness of the geography—explains why the Roman people often placed the public good ahead of private advantage. Despite this difference, Machiavelli is in agreement with Hobbes that Rome sought to recognize the public virtue of her best citizens regardless of wealth or “greatness” in Hobbes’s terms. The only reason a man like Cincinnatus, a simple farmer, could rise to the level of dictator was that “poverty did not close the path to any rank or honour whatsoever, and that exceptional ability was sought after wherever it made its home.”<sup>83</sup> Similarly, the Romans such as

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<sup>81</sup> *Discourses on Livy*, I.1.20.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, I.1.22.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, III.25.316-317.

Cincinnatus did not use their positions for private advantage, for “winning honour from war was enough for these citizens . . . they left all profit to the public.”<sup>84</sup>

This celebration of public glory was considered by both Hobbes and Machiavelli to be an important aspect of political greatness and stability. However, Hobbes seemed to abandon this thought during his scientific phase. In *Leviathan* Hobbes praises those actions that are conducive to private advantage and condemns those actions that are conducive to public glory. It is “Desire of Ease, and sensuall Delight” which is praised by Hobbes, for it “disposeth men to obey a common power.”<sup>85</sup> Conversely, the honor that attends public virtue “enclineth to Contention, Enmity, and War: Because the way of one Competitor, to the attaining of his desire, is to kill, subdue, supplant, or repell” any rivals.<sup>86</sup> The cult of glorious actions, praised by Hobbes in his earliest writings, finds little support in his scientific ones. Two observations need to be made. First, Hobbes’s science concludes that private individuals should limit themselves to their private pursuits; for “there are very many, that thinke themselves wiser, and abler to govern the Publique, better than the rest; and these strive to reforme and innovate, one this way, another that way; and thereby bring it into Distraction and Civill warre.”<sup>87</sup> Second, any public honoring or dishonoring is the job of the sovereign: the sovereign is “to appoint what Order of place, and dignity, each man shall hold; and what signes of respect, in

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> *Leviathan*, I.11.161.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., II.17.226.



publique or private meetings, they shall give to one another.”<sup>88</sup> In other words, the people under the sovereign’s jurisdiction play no part in honoring or dishonoring their neighbors, except as directed by the sovereign.

However, the glorification of private citizens for noble deeds seems to find renewed support in Hobbes’s dialogues. *A Dialogue* ends with a discussion of Parliament from its Saxon origins. The lawyer conveys that it was advantageous for the kings that they called “a great part of the wisest and discreetest Men of the Realm, and made Laws by their advice.”<sup>89</sup> The philosopher does not dispute the wisdom of this custom, but only conveys the problem that “it is a hard matter to know who is the wisest in our times.”<sup>90</sup> The lawyer then describes “that the Townsmen of every Town were the Electors of their own Burgesses, and Judges of their discretion; and that the Law, whether they be discreet or not, will suppose them to be discreet till the contrary be apparent.”<sup>91</sup> Thus, we find in the dialogues one instance where custom allows the people to honor one of their own using mechanisms outside of the sovereign office.

In *Behemoth* Hobbes most clearly shows the utility of public honor. As discussed in chapter IV, he chooses to end *Behemoth* by praising Lord Monck, not Charles II. This is presumably because of Monck’s indispensable contribution to peace, a contribution that was so instrumental that A’s final line is a prayer for Charles II to “have” a general

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., II.18.236.

<sup>89</sup> *A Dialogue*, p. 166.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

like Monck “as often as there shall be need.”<sup>92</sup> Of course, the question needs to be asked: how can such a general always be available if his deeds are not considered praiseworthy? The answer is that it is up to Hobbes, his characters A and B, and the citizens who value the peace to keep the memory of Lord Monck’s example available for future generations. Using Hobbes’s language from *A Discourse on Rome*, it is as if Monck’s virtues “deserved perpetuity in our memory” in the hope that they “breed a kind of emulation to imitate.”<sup>93</sup> Thus Hobbes sees the value of exceptional public conduct, especially when there is no sovereign that has the capacity or legitimacy to carry out the functions associated with public honor.

While *A Discourse on Rome* explores the concept of public honor, *A Discourse on Law* explores the relationship of the sovereign to the laws. Hobbes starts by describing the laws as “the Princes we ought to serve, the Captains we are to follow, the very rules, by which all the actions of our life be squared and disposed.”<sup>94</sup> It is important to notice that Hobbes describes the law in the same terms as he would describe the sovereign in his scientific works. In *A Discourse on Law*, Hobbes agrees “with Demonsthenes’s observation, who supposed Laws to be as the soul of a Commonwealth.”<sup>95</sup> More than thirty years later, Hobbes would write in the introduction of *Leviathan* that “the

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<sup>92</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 204.

<sup>93</sup> *Three Discourses*, p. 82.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

*Sovereignty* is an Artificial *Soul*, as giving life and motion to the whole body.”<sup>96</sup> The difference is one of prominence. In *A Discourse on Law*, the law is the highest authority that everyone in the commonwealth, even the sovereign himself, ought to obey. Hobbes used Solon’s answer to the question of the best regime to illustrate this point; the best regime is one “wherein the City obeyed the Magistrate, and the Magistrate the Laws.”<sup>97</sup>

In *Leviathan*, however, Hobbes clearly states that sovereigns cannot be subject to the laws in the same way as average citizens. If the sovereign were subject to the laws, then the commonwealth would need another sovereign above him in order to judge whether the laws were broken.<sup>98</sup> Accordingly, Hobbes wanted the sovereign to be the ultimate authority in the commonwealth; subjecting the sovereign to civil laws would be impossible, as this would necessarily divide the sovereign power. Similarly, forcing the sovereign to uphold past customs or precedents is equally problematic. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes states that “the Length of Time shal bring no prejudice” to the sovereign’s prerogative to uphold or deny precedents as he sees fit.<sup>99</sup> Forcing a sovereign to uphold the precedents of a past regime is limiting the sovereign power in a way that may lead to the weakening of the commonwealth. Hobbes seems to indicate that the sovereign cannot be accused of injustice, because the sovereign cannot be found in violation of law in either its positive or precedent forms. Perhaps this is the case in terms of Hobbes’s

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<sup>96</sup> *Leviathan*, introduction, p. 81.

<sup>97</sup> *Three Discourses*, p. 111.

<sup>98</sup> *Leviathan*, II.29.367.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, II.26.313.

scientific understanding of the commonwealth, but it remains to be asked whether the commonwealth is able to follow Hobbes's prescriptive philosophy.

As observed in chapter III, the very mechanisms of the English commonwealth prevented the type of scientific understanding offered by Hobbes from reaching general acceptance. Given the admission from *Behemoth's* A that "the power of the mighty hath no foundation but in the opinion and belief of the people," the public *perception* of the sovereign's rightful authority is just as important as the *actual* rightness of the sovereign's authority. The importance of public perception to the functioning of the state is something Machiavelli understood well. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli shows how "it is necessary" for a sovereign prince "to be so prudent as to know how to avoid the infamy of those vices that would take his state from him and to be on guard against those that do not, if that is possible."<sup>100</sup> It is tempting to interpret this passage as evidence that a sovereign prince need not follow the conventional morals of his state. While it is true that Machiavelli's prince is in many respects above the law, Machiavelli understands that it is often to a prince's advantage to obey his own laws. Using the rape of Lucretia during the reign of Tarquin the Proud as an example, Machiavelli observed in *Discourses on Livy* that princes "begin to lose the state the moment they begin to break the laws and those ways and customs that are ancient and under which men have lived for a long time."<sup>101</sup> It is comforting for the people to know that the law, once established, will be adhered to by the prince in power; for "when a prince does this and the people realize that

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<sup>100</sup> *The Prince*, ch. 15, p. 62.

<sup>101</sup> *Discourses on Livy*, III.5.255.

under no circumstances will he break these laws, they will begin in a short time to live in security and contentment.”<sup>102</sup> Of course, princes are considered to be above the law, and in fact need to be above the law in order to govern their states successfully. It is often to a prince’s advantage to follow the laws as if he were subject to them as much as any other citizen.

Even the Hobbes who wrote *A Discourse on Laws* understands that it “be sometimes necessary” for the sovereign to change the laws “such as are made in times of war,” but he also admits that “it ought notwithstanding to be done with a great deal of caution.”<sup>103</sup> What remains consistent throughout all of Hobbes’s writings is the notion that the sovereign must have the ability to alter or even go against the laws as stated. What *A Discourse on Laws* offers, however, is an argument for why it is *advantageous* for a sovereign to obey the laws as stated, making changes only when the law is “incongruous to the present times and government.”<sup>104</sup> Hobbes describes how it is advantageous where he discusses “the honor of a Kingdom.”<sup>105</sup> He cautions that “if the Laws be neglected” by the sovereign, “his person is more subject to the attempts of Traitors, his life to the tongues of malice and detraction, and his reputation to perpetual infamy.”<sup>106</sup> However, if the sovereign shows himself “to be as the fountain of Justice, so Justice keeps the fountain free from corruption, infection, or danger, prescribing rules for

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., I.16.64.

<sup>103</sup> *Three Discourses*, p. 114.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

fear it corrupts, ascribing Antidotes for fear of infection, and preserving his person, and reputation both from sensible, and insensitive danger.”<sup>107</sup> Hobbes says little about the *powers* of the sovereign, but rather describes the *conduct* of the sovereign as instrumental to his safety. Therefore, at the heart of *A Discourse on Law* is a discussion of political skill and, as shown in the previous chapter, this is a discussion Hobbes would continue in his treatment of English monarchs in his dialogues.

In these early works, however, political skill as a theme is most easily observed in *A Discourse upon the Beginning of Tacitus*. As he does in his other works, Hobbes shows a preference for monarchy, and discusses classical Rome as a kingdom from the time of Romulus to the time of the emperors. The period of the Roman republic is portrayed by Hobbes as a kind of extended deviation from Rome’s monarchical founding—a kind of illness—where the people “grew perplexed at every inconvenience, and shifted from one form of government to another, and so to another, and then to the first again; like a man in a fever, that often turns to and fro in his bed, but finds himself without ease, and sick in every posture.”<sup>108</sup> What is perhaps most interesting, however, is why Rome became ill in the first place, as Hobbes discusses how monarchs become tyrants. Referring to the rape of Lucretia, Hobbes describes how “this, together with the pride, and tyranny of the King, gave color to his expulsion, and to the alteration of government.”<sup>109</sup> Hobbes then discusses what made the Tarquin regime prone to

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., pp. 108-109.

<sup>108</sup> *Three Discourses*, p. 34.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

overthrow, as the “Kings abuse their places, tyrannize over their Subjects, and wink at all outrages, and abuses, committed against them by any either of their children, or favorites.”<sup>110</sup> Even though “bondage” is not “always joined to Monarchy,” the actions of the Tarquins caused the citizens to break “forth into attempts for liberty,” as such actions are “hardly endured by man’s nature, and passion.”<sup>111</sup> Far from being a simple product of the subjective fancy of each citizen,<sup>112</sup> Hobbes gives specific causes explaining why sovereigns are perceived as tyrants. In the case of Tarquin the Proud, the preference he displayed towards his son and the contempt for the rule of law undermined the legitimacy of the regime. Given Hobbes’s strong condemnation of rebellion throughout his works, it is surprising how little Hobbes criticizes this decision to overthrow Tarquin. However, Rome’s mistake was that the citizens confused the failure of a *monarch* with the failure of *monarchy* as a political system, starting a period of “change and variety of governments” until the rise of Julius Caesar: an event that ushered in “the last change of the Roman government.”<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> “For they that are discontented under *Monarchy*, call it *Tyranny*” (*Leviathan*, II.19.240). It is interesting to note that two of Hobbes’s earliest critics, George Lawson and James Harrington, used *Leviathan*’s treatment of tyranny as an example of Hobbes’s failure to distinguish between good and bad rule. Taking an Aristotelian point of view, Lawson admonishes Hobbes for not understanding that “tyranie doth not signifie Monarchy, nor Oligarchy an Aristocracy. They signifie the vicious corruption of States degenerate from their original constitution.” Harrington also admonishes *Leviathan*’s description of the three deviant regimes (tyranny, oligarchy, and anarchy), because it maintains that “there is no other government in nature than one of the three, and also that the flesh of them cannot stink, the names of their corruptions being but the names of men’s fancies.” See Lawson’s “Examination of the Political Part of Mr. Hobbs His *Leviathan*” taken from Rogers (1995), p. 38; and Harrington’s *Oceana*, p. 10.

<sup>113</sup> *Three Discourses*, pp. 35-36.

Hobbes introduces Augustus as a man who “took upon him the Monarchy by force, and yet he so settled it, as the State could never recover liberty.”<sup>114</sup> Hobbes’s analysis of Tacitus shows that he was interested in “the means Augustus used in acquiring and confirming to himself the supreme and Monarchical authority.”<sup>115</sup> In other words, he was interested in Augustus’ political skill in acquiring his position as emperor. Like his predecessors Cinna and Sulla, Augustus “attained unto supreme power by violence and force,” but unlike his predecessors, Augustus used “politic provisions” to ensure his future rule.<sup>116</sup> Augustus was able to triumph over his political rivals because of his political skill, not necessarily because of his military skill alone. The first evidence of Augustus’ skill in action was in naming himself *Princeps* (first citizen) instead of *Rex* (king). This is because Augustus “knew that the multitude was not stirred to sedition so much, with extraordinary power, as insolent Titles, which might put them to consider of that power, and the loss of their liberty.”<sup>117</sup>

One of the reasons Augustus proved to be a shrewd politician was his understanding of the symbolic value of titles, a characteristic that Oliver Cromwell also possessed. Although Cromwell possessed the power that kings normally possess, he did not take the title of king, but that of Lord Protector. In *Behemoth*, character A recalls how in 1656 “an alderman of London” made a motion for Cromwell “to leave the title of

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>115</sup> *Three Discourses*, p. 31.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 38.



Protector, and take upon him that of King.”<sup>118</sup> B replies that “the motion was made on purpose to ruin both the Protector himself and his ambitious officers.” However, A explains that Cromwell gave Parliament “a peremptory refusal” to take the title of king. When B asks “what made him refuse the title of King?” A responds by stating that “the army being addicted to their great officers, and amongst those officers many hoping to succeed” Cromwell, including Major General Lambert, “would have mutinied against him.” It would seem that Cromwell, like Augustus, was aware of the political ramifications of title. This is why Cromwell “did never dare to take upon him the title of King, nor was ever able to settle it upon his children,”<sup>119</sup> as the political circumstances would not allow it.

Augustus’ rise to power in Rome parallels Oliver Cromwell’s rise to power in England in another way. Specifically, both Augustus and Cromwell acquired power slowly and methodically. Augustus first acquired authorization from the Senate to raise an army as a bulwark against the growing power of Mark Antony.<sup>120</sup> Cromwell proceeded in a similar fashion by first taking control of the army, “to be Generalissimo,”<sup>121</sup> and only after the force of arms was ceded to him would he proceed in grasping absolute power away from Parliament. These examples show the general

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<sup>118</sup> The following series of lines are from *Behemoth*, pp. 188-189.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>120</sup> “For Antony by occasion of Caesar’s slaughter, being himself then Consul, having taken arms, which the State feared he would make use of to serve his own ambition, and to set himself up in Caesar’s room: the Senate gave authority to Augustus to levy an Army, and make head against him” (*Three Discourses*, p. 36).

<sup>121</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 146.

observation *Behemoth's* A makes regarding the military: that while “it is the desire of most men to bear rule . . . few of them know what title one has to it more than another, besides the right of the sword.”<sup>122</sup> B also understands that a sovereign body that cedes control of the army to an usurper in effect cedes control over the commonwealth: “for they that keep an army, and cannot master it, must be subject to it as much as he that keeps a lion in his house.”<sup>123</sup> Where the force of arms goes, sovereignty follows. This is a principle that Machiavelli understood well; for “it is not reasonable that whoever is armed obey willingly whoever is unarmed, and that someone unarmed be secure among armed servants.”<sup>124</sup>

Hobbes's *Leviathan* has a different conception of the relationship between force of arms and sovereignty. This is most clearly seen in *Leviathan's* description of commanders in chapter 30. While Hobbes warns that a military commander can be “a dangerous thing to Sovereign Power,” the right to possess the title of sovereign “is so popular a quality, as he that has it needs no more, for his own part, to turn the hearts of his Subjects to him.”<sup>125</sup> In *Leviathan*, therefore, sovereignty does not come from possessing force of arms, but rather, force of arms comes from the title of sovereign. Sovereignty bestows legitimacy upon the ruler that an ambitious general will never possess through force of arms alone. The evidence Hobbes uses for this assertion is that “those, who by violence have at any time suppressed the Power of their lawfull

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> *The Prince*, ch. 14, p. 58.

<sup>125</sup> *Leviathan*, II.30.393-4.

Sovereign, before they could settle themselves in his place, have always put to the trouble of contriving their Titles, to save the People from the shame of receiving them.”<sup>126</sup>

Usurpers, therefore, contrive titles to provide themselves with some measure of legitimacy for their illegitimate acts. Though mentioning neither Augustus nor Cromwell by name, one might classify both Augustus and Cromwell as generals who tried to make their illegitimate claims to power more legitimate through the establishment of new titles. Neither character in *Behemoth* criticized Augustus or Cromwell for their choices of title. If anything, this seems to show that Hobbes understood why each of them chose the titles he did.

Hobbes conceived of the relationship between arms and title differently throughout his career. He first looked at Augustus’ use of the title *Princeps* as a shrewd strategic move, alongside his use of the army to re-establish monarchy. In his scientific phase, Hobbes believed that sovereignty was determined by consent, and that it was consent that gave the sovereign strength of arms.<sup>127</sup> In *Behemoth*, however, Hobbes seems to turn back to force of arms as the essential characteristic that establishes sovereignty, and Cromwell’s choice of the title Lord Protector as a shrewd choice to consolidate his power over an already fractured commonwealth. Given the similarities between the two, why was Augustus’ monarchical system able to last, while Cromwell’s protectorate ended shortly after his death?

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> See p. 200, note 17 above. Notice that the transfer of power and strength precedes the use of arms. Therefore, consent precedes the force of arms.

Although *A Discourse upon the Beginning of Tacitus* explains Augustus' rise to power, Hobbes devotes a great portion of his discourse to explaining the care Augustus gave to the issue of who would succeed him after his death. Hobbes writes that "when a Prince draws near to his end the people's minds are all set upon new hopes, and discourse of nothing that is present, but only what is in expectancy."<sup>128</sup> In states that vest a vast amount of power and discretion in one man, the future success or failure of the state relies on succession issues far more than in a system that spreads the power and discretion among several individuals. Whether by accident or design,<sup>129</sup> Augustus had the discretion to choose the best successor and, from Hobbes's account, used this discretion well. Among the possible candidates were Postumus Agrippa and Tiberius Claudius. Both were related to Augustus by marriage. Agrippa lacked "age and experience," which for Hobbes "are necessary for the government of a great Empire."<sup>130</sup> The lack of age and experience were not Agrippa's most detrimental characteristics. The "fierceness of his disposition," coupled with the censure given to him by the Senate (resulting in his banishment), meant that there was a very real fear that Agrippa would "make his revenge according to his own cruel inclination, and done contrary to the

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<sup>128</sup> *Three Discourses*, p. 62.

<sup>129</sup> An argument can be made that Augustus wanted one of his adopted sons (Caius and Lucius) to succeed him, but both were "prematurely cut off by destiny," having died before Augustus could name either boy heir. See Tacitus' *Annals*, book I, §3, p. 4; taken from *The Complete Works of Tacitus*, vol. 1, trans. Alfred Church & William Brodribb (New York, NY: Random House, 1942), hereafter referred to as *Annals*, book.section.page.

<sup>130</sup> *Three Discourses*, p. 63.

custom of human nature.”<sup>131</sup> One is reminded of Machiavelli’s advice in *Discourses on Livy* to “carefully consider whether or not to place anyone in any important administrative post who has been offended in some noteworthy way by others.”<sup>132</sup> Although Machiavelli wrote this advice in the context of appointments in republics, the advice seems equally applicable to the circumstances surrounding succession in an empire. Using the example of Consul Claudius Nero during the Second Punic War, Machiavelli observed that the Consul had no reservation to use his public power to “avenge himself upon the city and those citizens who had so ungratefully and shamelessly insulted him.”<sup>133</sup> This is similar to Hobbes’s understanding of the problems associated with the granting of public power to one who is scorned; for the people “can expect nothing but revenge” when the scorned individual is granted the power of the state.<sup>134</sup>

Hobbes then turns to the other possible candidate for succession: Tiberius. Although Tiberius was experienced, the fear was that he would “hold the reins of government too hard, especially over a people so lately weaned from liberty.”<sup>135</sup> This speculation was based upon Tiberius’ “pride and cruelty,” the former due to “his

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p. 63. Details on Postumus Agrippa’s banishment can be found in Tacitus’ *Annals*, I.6.6.

<sup>132</sup> *Discourses on Livy*, III.17.300.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., III.17.301.

<sup>134</sup> *Three Discourses*, p. 63.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

ancestors and education,” and the latter because of his own “demonstration.”<sup>136</sup> Also, Tiberius’ mother and two sons were considered “no small grievance to the Commonwealth,” and could potentially “draw the Commonwealth into faction and sedition” after Tiberius’ death.<sup>137</sup> Therefore, both potential successors had problems that might undermine the ability of either one to govern successfully. Hobbes ends the *Discourse upon the Beginning of Tacitus* before Augustus decides on Tiberius as his successor, but this omission does not lessen the argument that Hobbes presents, namely, that the transfer of power between a sovereign and a successor is not to be taken lightly. Both personal characteristics and public perception are vitally important to consider, as both can have an impact on the ability of the successor to fulfill the requirements of the office.

While Hobbes portrayed Augustus as mindful of the gravity surrounding the issue of succession, his portrayal of Oliver Cromwell’s handling of the succession issue in England is more critical. Major General John Lambert was “a man second to none but Oliver Cromwell in the favor of the army” and in fact had a “promise from the Protector” to succeed him.<sup>138</sup> Despite Lambert’s claim and legitimacy within the army, Cromwell “designed for his successor his eldest son Richard.”<sup>139</sup> The army’s acceptance of Richard Cromwell was at best “inconstant” for he was “irresolute, and without any military

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., pp. 64-65.

<sup>138</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 191.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

glory.”<sup>140</sup> Richard Cromwell’s brief seven month reign as Protector was marked by conspiracies from both the officers of the army and Parliament until he was forced to resign his title in April of 1659.<sup>141</sup>

The choice of successor is the one power of sovereignty that repeatedly preoccupies Hobbes throughout his career. Succession is a theme that Hobbes discusses in his earliest works, his *Behemoth*, and also in his *Leviathan*. In chapter 19, Hobbes lists several reasons why monarchy is superior to other forms of government, but in terms of succession, monarchy is at a distinct disadvantage. In democratic or aristocratic governments, the death of one of the members does not impede the function of the government, for popular assemblies can still conduct the commonwealth’s business with fewer members and elected bodies can call elections to fill any vacant seats. In monarchy, however, the death of the monarch seriously impedes the ability of the government to carry out its functions. Any sovereign instituted in the interim will simply not have the legitimacy necessary to be a proper sovereign, and therefore, it is no surprise that much of *Leviathan*’s chapter 19 is devoted to issues surrounding monarchical succession. Hobbes identifies the central crux of the succession problem: that “it is not manifest who is to appoint the Successor; nor many times, who it is whom he hath appointed.”<sup>142</sup> Because of the vacuum created after the death of a monarch, it is difficult to ascertain who or what should determine who the next monarch should be. Hobbes

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>142</sup> *Leviathan*, II.19.248.

would prefer that the sovereign choose his successor personally while the sovereign is still alive to do so.<sup>143</sup> What must be kept in mind, however, is that Hobbes provides no list of qualities that must be considered when choosing a successor. While giving the sovereign both the duty and the power to appoint a successor, Hobbes's science gives very little guidance as to whom to appoint, why the appointment should be made, and what criteria are important in determining who should be the successor.

One can conclude that succession—among the most important decisions a sovereign will make—is also the area where a sovereign's political skill is most needed. What makes this conclusion likely is that the chapter on succession is one of the few places where Hobbes discusses political skill in *Leviathan*.<sup>144</sup> He responds to the possibility that the sovereign may “give his Right of governing to a stranger” and that this stranger would “turn to the oppression of his Subjects.” Instead of equating oppressive government with foreign rule, Hobbes asserts that the “great inconvenience” of oppressive government “proceedeth not necessarily from the subjection to a strangers government, but from the unskillfulnesse of the Governours, ignorant of the true rules of politics.”<sup>145</sup> While Hobbes mentions political skill, he equates it to the understanding of “the true rules of politics,” which might be interpreted as an understanding of Hobbes's

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<sup>143</sup> “Therefore it is manifest, that by the Institution of Monarchy, the disposing of the Successor, is always left to the Judgment and Will of the present Possessor” (Ibid., II.19.249).

<sup>144</sup> There are three other places where Hobbes mentions political skill in *Leviathan*. The first is when Hobbes discusses the teaching of doctrine in chapter 18, as false doctrines are often taught because of the “unskillfulnesse of Governours” (Ibid., II.18.233). Another place is in chapter 20, where Hobbes claims that “the skill of making, and maintaining Common-wealths” has more akin to “Arithmetique and Geometry” than “Tennis-play” (Ibid., II.19.261). There is also a third mention of political skill in chapter 29 of book II when discussing the infirmities caused by the lack of absolute power. This passage (*Leviathan*, II.29.364) will be explained in further detail in the following chapter.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., II.19.250-251.



political science. However, Hobbes also goes beyond his political science by drawing upon two examples of political skill in action. The first example is the Roman practice of “giving sometimes to whole Nations, and sometimes to Principall men of every Nation they conquered, not onely the Privileges, but also the Name of Romans” taking “many of them into the Senate, and Offices of charge, even in the Roman City.”<sup>146</sup> The other example is James I’s “union of his two Realms of *England* and *Scotland*. Which if he could have obtained, had in all likelihood prevented the Civill warres, which make both those Kingdomes” at the time of Hobbes’s writing “miserable.”<sup>147</sup>

These two examples are uncharacteristic of Hobbes’s science for a few reasons. First, he is drawing from history rather than deducing from principles. In other words, Hobbes’s verbal clarity was not enough to counter the argument that a foreign sovereign would be oppressive. Instead, Hobbes used historical case studies to demonstrate examples of skillful appointment. These examples are important for another reason: political skill is also mindful of appearances. Both of these examples are cases where the sovereign’s intent was to make the government “digestible” by appointing those outside the national body (as in Rome), or dissolving the distinctions that separate two or more nationalities (as in James I’s attempt at unification). And yet, there is no real mandate—outside of this passage—that the sovereign in Hobbes’s science is under any obligation to make the regime “digestible” to the people. In other words, one of the marks of good sovereignty is to be aware of public perceptions, a far more Machiavellian bit of advice

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., II.19.251.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

than is typical for Hobbes's science. Perhaps the most instructive lesson we can receive from *Leviathan's* discussion of political skill is its brevity in comparison to the discussion in Hobbes's other works. Compared to Hobbes's works before *The Elements of Law* and after *Leviathan*, any discussion of political skill is difficult to find. But it is not so atypical of Hobbes when we consider that his earlier writings (like the selections from the *Horae Subsecivae*) and his later writings (like *Behemoth*) examine political skill in a much more direct way. Not surprisingly, Hobbes's advice in these works also bears a striking resemblance to the advice given by Machiavelli: that historical examples are valuable, that a sovereign should be mindful of appearances, and that the political skill of the leadership—far more than political institutions—will be instrumental in determining a regime's success.

Rather than take a completely new approach to politics, it would seem that Hobbes is reintroducing himself to concepts and methods he set aside after his translation of Thucydides. While there is no mention of Machiavelli in Hobbes's work, his earliest works have a distinctively Machiavellian flavor, a flavor that we recognize again in his later works. Between these two phases in Hobbes's career, we have his science: an approach that possesses some similarity to Machiavelli's political thought, but without much discussion about the role of the sovereign's personal qualities or the sovereign's political skill. Given the importance of these elements in the English Civil War, it is not surprising that Hobbes would return to political skill as a theme, reorienting his philosophy as useful for more than *how to set up a government*, but also, *how to govern*.

## CHAPTER VII

### HOBBS'S LEGACY AND LESSON

The previous chapter showed how Hobbes's approach in the dialogues was not without precedent. Machiavelli emphasized the notion that the success or failure of a regime depends upon the political skill of the sovereign. This is also a quality of Hobbes's earliest works, but it is a quality that is relatively absent from his political science treatises. Hobbes seems to reintroduce the concept of political skill in his dialogues. Hobbes's earliest works shared similarities with the reason of state tradition typically associated with Machiavelli and Tacitus. But Hobbes moved away from that tradition with the publication of his *The Elements of Law*, the first of his scientific works. As chapters III and IV show, however, this scientific tradition might have proved insufficient in itself to provide a complete or accurate solution to the problems of politics. What was missing was a discussion of the importance of personality, leadership, or political skill on the well-being of the commonwealth. This was, as the previous chapter showed, a major feature of Hobbes's work before *The Elements of Law* as well as a major feature of his dialogues. Therefore, it is not incorrect to make the assertion that Hobbes comes full circle: he ascribes a strong role for political skill early in his career, later eschewing political skill for a more generalizable and precise science of justice and institutions, only to reintroduce political skill as an important concept in his dialogues.

It remains to be asked what this progression of Hobbes's thought might tell us about Hobbes, and furthermore, what Hobbes's journey might tell us about the way we approach social science today. In order to answer these questions, it is useful to see exactly why Hobbes's scientific approach was so important to the development of the social sciences to the present day. Two features of Hobbes's approach have been instrumental in the development of modern social science: his systematic approach to uncover the effectual truth of politics, and his optimism about the ability of science to solve perennial political problems. Though not all social scientists possess these two Hobbesian tendencies, many social scientists do, including some of the most influential social scientists in the history of social thought.

### **Section 1: Hobbes's Legacy, Appeal, and Idealism**

Although this study explores deviations from Hobbes's science as outlined in his famous treatises, Hobbes will probably always be remembered for his unique approach to studying political questions. The very fact that Hobbes was the first to approach politics systematically makes him important to the history of political thought. What makes Hobbes's *Leviathan* so compelling is the sheer logic and clarity of its argument. As a work of political philosophy, *Leviathan* is uncannily precise, which is something Hobbes thought necessary in order for the treatise to serve its intended function: to solve the problem of civil unrest.

The persuasive power of science and the ability of science to create a consensus of opinion were attitudes that were appealing in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Although he was a critic of Hobbes, John Dewey nevertheless respected

Hobbes for his courage to break away from the established conventions of his time. In “The Motivation of Hobbes’s Political Philosophy,” Dewey described the historical and common law examples used by Hobbes in *A Dialogue*.<sup>1</sup> He recognized that Hobbes was up to something quite different from previous conceptions of politics. The audience for Hobbes’s philosophy was all persons, regardless of religious denomination or cultural peculiarity. While Hobbes’s evidence was anecdotal rather than empirical, Dewey was impressed at the analytical framework Hobbes used to understand anecdotal evidence such as laws and history. Hobbes’s defense of absolute monarchy seemed backward, if not untenable, for Dewey to accept. Nevertheless, Dewey admired Hobbes’s method of examining humanistic phenomena such as morals and politics as scientific phenomena. Dewey appreciated Hobbes’s thought, a thought shared with Jeremy Bentham, that “moral science was one with political science, and was not a theoretical luxury, but a social necessity. . . . Progress beyond them comes not from a hostile attitude to these conceptions, but from improved knowledge of human nature.”<sup>2</sup> As science would discover the underlying relationships within politics, human beings would gradually drop the authoritative opinions they had previously accepted. As an agent of change, political

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<sup>1</sup> “When I first became aware of these specific empirical sources for Hobbes’s political philosophy, I was inclined to suppose that he had made the latter a necessary part of a deductive system, from that inordinate love of a formal system to which philosophers are given. . . . Further study led me, however, to a different position, to the position that Hobbes was satisfied that . . . he had given them a strict scientific or rational form. And while this point is of no great importance as merely as item in Hobbes’s biography, it is, I think, of fundamental importance in the theme that Hobbes’s great work was in freeing, once and for all, morals and politics from subservience to divinity and making them a branch of natural science. So I offer no apology for setting forth the evidence that Hobbes himself believed in the scientific status of his politics.” Taken from Dewey’s article, “The Motivation of Hobbes’s Political Philosophy,” Vol. I, chap. 2 in *Great Political Thinkers 8: Hobbes*, edited by John Dunn and Ian Harris, pp. 71-94. Lyme, NH: Elger Reference, 1997, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

science held the promise of being not only a *descriptive* science, but also a *prescriptive* science, gradually undermining the historical distinctions that are merely arbitrary in the final analysis. The optimistic notion that social science had the capacity not only to *understand*, but *transform* social institutions was a popular idea, and John Dewey's writings on the theory of social intelligence build upon the Hobbesian conception that science had the capacity to transform public opinion.

Dewey believed that the object of science in the United States was not just the study of democracy; science *was* democracy in a very real sense. While Dewey never admitted that Hobbes influenced his concept of social intelligence, Dewey's concept of social intelligence was Hobbesian in the sense that science was a language that creates consensus among citizens. The two thinkers differ with respect to which political form the scientific consensus would support. While *Leviathan* made the case that the scientific consensus would support absolute government, Dewey believed that the scientific consensus would support democracy and limited government. In *The Public and its Problems*, Dewey stresses the importance of dissemination and education in the growth of knowledge.<sup>3</sup> When discussing a conversation he had with a friend, Dewey claimed that scientific knowledge can only be truly instrumental in creating change if it is shared

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<sup>3</sup> "My old friend was aware that a thing is fully known only when it is published, shared, socially accessible. Record and communication are indispensable to knowledge. Knowledge cooped up in a private consciousness is a myth, and knowledge of social phenomena is peculiarly dependent upon dissemination, for only by distribution can such knowledge be either obtained or tested. A fact of community life which is not spread abroad so as to be a common possession is a contradiction in terms. Dissemination is something other than scattering at large. Seeds are sown, not by virtue of being thrown out at random, but by being so distributed as to take root and have a chance at growth. Communication of the results of social inquiry is the same thing as the formation of public opinion. This makes one of the first ideas framed in the growth of political democracy as it will be one of the last to be fulfilled. For public opinion is judgment which is formed and entertained by those who constitute the public and is about public affairs. Each of the two phases imposes for its realization conditions hard to meet." Taken from Dewey's *The Public and its Problems*, 1927 (Denver: Alan Swallow Press), pp. 176-177.

with and promulgated to a general audience. Through the promulgation of knowledge, scientific reasoning creates harmony between human beings. In this way, Dewey saw education and science as leading toward political democracy. Scientific reasoning gives individuals within a society a common language and knowledge that promotes consensus about the right course of action. Like both Hobbes and Steffens, Dewey realized how vulnerable an uneducated public could be when faced with propaganda from ambitious, self-interested elites. Dewey warned that “as long as interests of pecuniary profit are powerful, and a public has not located and identified itself, those who have this interest will have an unresisted motive for tampering with the springs of political action in all that affects them.”<sup>4</sup> The central problem of the public, as Dewey understood it, was that the public needed “the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion. . . . upon freeing and perfecting the processes of inquiry and of the dissemination of their conclusions. . . . It is not necessary that the many should have the knowledge and the skill to carry on the needed investigations; what is required is that they have the ability to judge of the bearing of the knowledge supplied by others upon common concerns.”<sup>5</sup> Dewey’s faith in the power of an enlightened citizenry was similar to Hobbes’s in *Leviathan* insofar as both believed that science provided solutions for political unrest and general misery.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 208-209.

While *Leviathan* contains many passages that show how difficult it is for human beings to reach a consensus about anything,<sup>6</sup> *Leviathan* also contains a conception of human nature that can transcend this limitation. In a statement that appears almost Kantian, Hobbes described human beings as “makers, and orderers” of reality, separate from their capacity as mere “matter.”<sup>7</sup> Convinced that human beings could and would support a way out of the “irregular justling and hewing one another” that described politics as Hobbes had come to know it, *Leviathan* served as a blueprint of how a commonwealth and all within it should function.

Ferdinand Tönnies was also impressed with Hobbes’s approach to political analysis. What made Hobbes’s approach unique for Tönnies was Hobbes’s assertion that the political commonwealth was artificial. Unlike the ancients, Hobbes believed that the commonwealth could not be described as a natural or sentimental association. Rather, the commonwealth was an association that was engineered, resting upon a consensus of human reason.<sup>8</sup> While the matter or material of commonwealth was human beings, the same human beings who were governed by the commonwealth also governed it in return insofar as they made and sustained the political relationship through consent. Tönnies’s praise of Hobbes was so complete that he once described Hobbes’s philosophy as “the

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<sup>6</sup> For example, see *Leviathan* I.6.120-121, I.8.137, I.11.161, I.14.189, and I.15.213.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 363.

<sup>8</sup> “Political societies, however—and the operative word is ‘political’—are not a mere matter of getting together but they are alliances, and to establish an alliance, trust and a compact are needed. Children and uneducated persons, Hobbes goes on, are unable to recognize the nature of these; those who have no experience of the damage that results from the absence of society do not know its usefulness. The ones who do not understand what society is, cannot enter it; the others, who do not know what it is good for, do not care.” See Tönnies’s “Hobbes and the *Zoon Politikon*” taken from *Ferdinand Toennies: On Sociology: Pure, Applied, and Empirical*, edited and translated by Werner Cahnman and Rudolf Heberle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 49.



most elaborate and most consistent system of the doctrine commonly known as natural law (*Naturrecht*), including, as it always did, a theory of the state.”<sup>9</sup>

What impressed Tönnies the most about Hobbes was his analytical and precise approach to social phenomena. What surprised Tönnies was not Hobbes’s influence in social science, but rather, that Hobbes did not have a greater influence in the history of ideas. Hobbes’s “rationalistic and individualistic philosophy of law” was overshadowed by historical jurisprudence and more organic theories of the state,<sup>10</sup> but these later developments in the study of politics did not fully appreciate the differences between the state and other forms of social association.

Hobbes’s conception of the state as an artificial construction would be reflected in Tönnies’s own work on forms of social organization. Famous for his distinction between the *Gemeinschaft* and the *Gesellschaft*, Tönnies would reiterate Hobbes’s definition of the commonwealth as an artificial construction, or as Tönnies described it, an “imaginary and mechanical structure” which “is the concept of *Gesellschaft*.”<sup>11</sup> While other forms of social organization such as the family or community were natural or sentimental, institutions of the *Gesellschaft* type were divorced from man’s natural sentiments as a conglomeration of impersonal associations.<sup>12</sup> Unlike Aristotle, Tönnies—like Hobbes

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<sup>9</sup> Taken from Tönnies’s “The Present Problems of Social Structure,” *ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>10</sup> See Tönnies’s preface to the Second Edition of *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, *ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>11</sup> See Charles Loomis’s translation of *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, renamed *Community and Society*, 1957, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press), p. 33.

<sup>12</sup> “To conclude our theory, two periods stand thus contrasted with each other in the history of the great systems of culture: a period of *Gesellschaft* follows a period of *Gemeinschaft*. The *Gemeinschaft* is

before him—argued that man is political by convention rather than by nature. Human beings serving in their capacity as makers of the political order have the power to create whatever political arrangement seems advantageous.

Of course, what is advantageous for some might not be so for others, or even for the majority. Tönnies, like Dewey and Hobbes, believed that the public was especially vulnerable to propaganda and other tools of the politically ambitious. While the commonwealth was able to reach its highest potential as a rational agent when all the members of a community functioned together, one individual or group could tend to dominate over all others.<sup>13</sup> A powerful political minority was capable of influencing a majority when it had the power of the press, and by extension, the power over public opinion.<sup>14</sup> While Tönnies did not propose a solution to this problem, he did discuss the concept of interdependence, and considered how individuals might come to an understanding of reciprocal rights and duties either through “predominantly emotional or

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characterized by the social will as concord, folkways, mores, and religion; the *Gesellschaft* by the social will as convention, legislation, and public opinion,” (ibid., p. 231).

<sup>13</sup> “The will of a commonwealth is usually represented in its assembly either by one man (the prince), several (the nobles or aldermen), or many (the masses, the people). . . . In the end, the masses become the intellectual center, the brains of the social system; as such this center can function much more perfectly than its predecessors in that role [monarchy and aristocracy], for, although confronted with more difficult problems through the close contacts of its members (or elements), its faculties are heightened by constant practice and experience. It is, therefore, much more likely to produce the highest and noblest intelligence in the political field. But the commonwealth derives its full dignity only from the consensus and co-operation of those three organs [the prince, the aristocrats, and the masses], even though, in reality, one may become predominant while the others wither away” (ibid., p. 213).

<sup>14</sup> “Thus, the press is the real instrument (“organ”) of public opinion, weapon and tool in the hands of those who know how to use it and have to use it; it possesses universal power as the dreaded critic of events and changes in social conditions. It is comparable and, in some respects, superior to the material power which the states possess through their armies, their treasuries, and their bureaucratic civil service” (ibid., p. 221). Cf. A’s assertion in *Behemoth*, “the power of the mighty hath no foundation but in the opinion and belief of the people,” (*Behemoth*, p. 95).

predominantly intellectual” means.<sup>15</sup> This conception of how individuals become motivated toward interdependence with one another is similar to how *Leviathan* described the motivations which compel individuals to enter into civil society. The fear of violent death can be a motive, but as A states in *Behemoth*, general enlightenment, or sufficient understanding of “the rules of just and unjust” accomplishes the same end.<sup>16</sup>

Unlike Dewey, Tönnies was less concerned with democracy as an abstract concept, but was greatly concerned with the special nature of political institutions. As constructs of the human mind, political relationships differed from other relationships between human beings. Nevertheless, both Dewey and Tönnies were familiar with Hobbes’s work, and both seemed to use Hobbes’s science as a model for the method and aims of social science. The goal of social science was to make politics understandable, and by making politics understandable, science could help change the political system for the benefit of all who lived under it.<sup>17</sup> What made *Leviathan* an idealistic work is its recognition of the power of human reason to rectify the problems of politics. For Hobbes, science was not just a diversion for the curious; it was also a vehicle for solving practical problems. This is a theme that would be resurrected by social scientists in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The primary focus of this emerging social science was to ensure that the public was educated, since bad administration tended to thrive when the public

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<sup>15</sup> *Community and Society* (1957), p. 242.

<sup>16</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 39.

<sup>17</sup> “The *end* or *scope* of philosophy is, that we may make use to our benefit of effects formerly seen; or that, by application of bodies to one another, we may produce the like effects of those we conceive in our mind, as far forth as matter, strength, and industry, will permit, for the commodity of human life” (*De Corpore*, p. 7).

was not. Like Lincoln Steffens's observation that the problems of urban politics can be solved by studying the "unstudied art of municipal government,"<sup>18</sup> many social scientists of the early part of the twentieth century believed that the solution to political problems depended on creating a better citizen through education. Through education, science could create harmony among reasonable individuals supporting reasonable administration. An educated public was one that could resist propaganda and the avaricious tendencies of the ambitious, which was quite similar to A's belief in *Behemoth* that citizens should learn the "rules of just and unjust."<sup>19</sup> In both Hobbes's science and the emerging social science of the twentieth century, good government was seen as a function of the citizens' due diligence more than it was seen as a function of the political skill of the leadership.

Despite Hobbes's preference for absolute government, there was something rather democratic in his scientific analysis of the commonwealth. Hobbes understood that the common people were political actors in their own right who played an active role in the affairs of the state. Because citizens create discord as well as peace, *Leviathan* was an attempt to provide a clear and convincing case for citizens to want to support the governing authority. *Leviathan* did not represent the sovereign as a shrewd politician or an ambitious master. Rather, the sovereign was portrayed as a prudent administrator and a representative of the people. Hobbes reasoned that when individuals agree to the same standard of what a sovereign should be, they become in essence one person as manifest in

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<sup>18</sup> See above in chapter. I, pp. 13-15.

<sup>19</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 39.

the individual chosen to represent them.<sup>20</sup> The irony of *Leviathan* is that it portrays absolute sovereignty as a form of democracy, an irony not lost on Hanna Pitkin in her work on representation. She observes that *Leviathan* does not distinguish popularly elected government from any other form, as “every government is a representative government” insofar as the sovereign authority acts as a representative of the people.<sup>21</sup> What is missing in *Leviathan*’s concept of representation is the notion that the sovereign is ever accountable to the people after the initial covenant that installs the sovereign.<sup>22</sup> The only option *Leviathan* leaves open for sovereign accountability is civil war which, for Hobbes, was an untenable alternative.

Yet the problem of viewing the sovereign as an unaccountable representative is only a problem when we examine *Leviathan* through pessimistic eyes. As readers of Hobbes we must remember that when he was composing his political science treatises, Hobbes was an optimist. He, like most scientific optimists, believed that if the people were sufficiently educated to discern good government from bad government, they would never willingly choose the bad. This may have been Hobbes’s hope as much as it was Lincoln Steffens’s hope when writing about the perils facing Seth Low. Theoretically speaking, skillful and ambitious politicians would gain no traction if popular opinion

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<sup>20</sup> “A Multitude of men, are made *One* Person, when they are by one man, or one Person, Represented; so that it be done with the consent of every one of that Multitude in particular. For it is the *Unity* of the Representer, not the *Unity* of the Represented, that maketh the Person *One*” (*Leviathan*, I.16.220).

<sup>21</sup> See Pitkin’s *Representation* (New York: Atherton Press, 1969), p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> “Some writers [Carl Friedrich, Otto von Geierke, John of Salisbury, Charles A Beard, and John Lewis] will argue that Hobbes has missed the very essence of representation: than above all a representative is someone who will be held responsible to those for whom he acts, who must account to them for his actions. What defines representation is not an act of authorization that initiates it, but an act of holding-to-account that terminates it” (ibid., p. 9).

valued the competent leaders they *had* more than the rhetorically skillful leaders they *could have*. In practice, though, good administration is as much the victim of politics as the goal of politics. Charles I may have been a capable administrator, but this alone could do nothing to save his administration from collapse.

This problem with *Leviathan* reflected a tendency in social science to presume its own utility, a presumption of utility that, as we have seen in chapter III, depends on optimal political and societal circumstances to be effective. However, *Behemoth* was not the last work, and Hobbes was not the last thinker, to expose this presumption of utility. In the first half of the twentieth century, a group of theologians, historians and legal experts challenged the idealistic tendencies of social science. These authors became known as the realists, and their critique exposes a tension in Hobbes's *Leviathan* that Hobbes himself would recognize in his later works.

## **Section 2: The Historical Critique of *Leviathan*'s Science**

While Hobbes was optimistic that science could be useful when he wrote his political science treatises, this optimism faded after the Restoration. Theoretically, Hobbes's science may have been "evident to the meanest capacity" and perhaps even "easie to be observed,"<sup>23</sup> but his science depended on optimal political and social circumstances to become the framework on which the commonwealth could be erected. England at the time was in no position to adopt Hobbes's science, and his science was only persuasive to the select few who could respect its purpose. For better or worse, England was subject to the old way of politics: a kind of statecraft that depended on the

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<sup>23</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 39 and *Leviathan*, I.15.215, respectively.

prudence of leaders, the wit of orators, and the memory of the citizens to maintain order and ensure the common good. Fortunately for England, this combination proved to be enough to bring about the Restoration, proving that the peace can be found through means other than science: a fact that Hobbes could not help but acknowledge in the actions of Lord Monck and the English people. While not specifically discounting his observations into human nature and good government, Hobbes's later texts were tempered with a sobering truth: that science alone can do little without the aid of strong, capable politicians who are masters of the statesman's art. Consequently, it is no surprise that Hobbes uses his later works to emphasize the actions of those whom he considers to be good statesmen: William I, Henry VII, Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, Lord Monck, Charlemagne, and the like. By so doing, Hobbes shifts the responsibility for governing the regime from the scientist back to the statesman. The knowledge that is emphasized resembles the art of the tennis player more than the abstract reasoning of the mathematician.

Hobbes's journey from scientific idealist to historical realist is important because it mirrors a similar journey in the discipline of political science. Perhaps no other movement within the history of ideas would embrace Hobbes's observations more fully, yet reject Hobbes's science more completely, than the realist movement of the early twentieth century. The early founders of the realist movement in political science agreed with Hobbes as they "put for a generall inclination of all mankind, a perpetuall and restless desire of Power after power, that ceaseth onely in Death."<sup>24</sup> In this respect,

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<sup>24</sup> *Leviathan*, I.11.161.

Hobbes was recognized by many realists as an early proponent of realism.<sup>25</sup> However, the aim of Hobbes's science and the realist's perspective were theoretically opposed. Unlike Hobbes, realists tended to reject the notion shared by Hobbes and Dewey that science and education provided practical solutions to moral problems. Much of the realist criticism of social science was in response to the failure of enlightened policy to mitigate the uncertainty of the era between World War I and World War II; but realists such as Reinhold Niebuhr, E.H. Carr, and Hans Morgenthau did not formulate their critiques of scientific idealism solely in reference to the events of their time. Realists were students of history, and noticed common tendencies in human institutions that seemed to resist the ability of social science to foster change.

Reinhold Niebuhr was one of the first realist scholars to attack the kind of scientific idealism that made Hobbes so appealing to scientific idealists. While Niebuhr would not disagree that Hobbes's observations of human nature have some merit, he would also point out how Hobbes's scientific project was deeply flawed.<sup>26</sup> Like Hobbes, Niebuhr observed the inordinate selfishness of human beings, as "man's lusts are fed by

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<sup>25</sup> See above in chapter III, p. 83, note 1.

<sup>26</sup> Despite being one of Hobbes's harshest critics, Niebuhr was an avid reader of Hobbes, and the works referenced throughout Niebuhr's *Nature and Destiny of Man* include Hobbes's *Elements of Law*, *Elements of Philosophy (De Corpore)*, *Leviathan* and *Behemoth*. Niebuhr's analysis of man's natural condition was similar to Hobbes's view insofar as "the ego" of man "does not feel secure and therefore grasps for more power in order to make itself secure" (p. 189). Due to Niebuhr's Christian perspective, however, he believed that free will gave humankind a far greater capacity to place the ego in check than Hobbes's science assumed. Rather than acknowledge man's free will to live morally, Hobbes turns to the state "to avoid anarchy by the creation of an absolute government, to the authority of which all social decisions are submitted" (p. 100). Therefore, Niebuhr concluded that Hobbes's science underestimated the human capacity for self-control and overestimated the capacity of political systems to address specific deficiencies in human nature. It is in this way that Niebuhr criticizes not only Hobbes, but also, scientific idealism in general, as "man actually has a greater degree of freedom in his essential structure and less freedom in history than modern culture assumes" (p. 101). See *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. 1 (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964).



his imagination, and he will not be satisfied until the universal objectives which the imagination envisages are attained.”<sup>27</sup> This inordinate selfishness is the reason why society resembles “a perpetual state of war” because “lacking moral and rational resources to organize its [society’s] life, without resort to coercion . . . men remain the victims of the individuals, classes and nations by whose force a momentary coerced unity is achieved, and further conflicts are certainly created.”<sup>28</sup> Like Hobbes in *Leviathan*, Niebuhr was aware that the problems in politics can be directly attributed to the inordinate love of glory that characterizes the ambitious few.<sup>29</sup> However, Niebuhr was much more pessimistic than Hobbes about the capacity of science or education to do much to solve the commonwealth’s moral dilemmas.

In his introduction to *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, Niebuhr points out that “the most persistent error of modern educators and moralists is the assumption that our social difficulties are due to the failure of the social sciences to keep pace with the physical sciences which have created our technological civilization. . . . This assumption is that, with a little more time, a little more adequate moral and social pedagogy and a generally higher development of human intelligence, our social problems will approach

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<sup>27</sup> See Niebuhr’s *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), p. 44. Cf. *Leviathan*, I.8.137: “The secret thoughts of a man run over all things, holy, profane, clean, obscene, grave, and light, without shame or blame; which verball discourse cannot do, father than the judgement shall approve of the Time, Place, and Persons.”

<sup>28</sup> Niebuhr (2001), pp. 19-20.

<sup>29</sup> Perhaps the best statement of how the love of glory corrupts the commonwealth can be found in Gabriella Slomp’s *Thomas Hobbes and the Political Philosophy of Glory* where she states, “Of all human passions Hobbes highlighted one that in his view was of paramount political importance—the human desire for ‘glory,’ which in today’s language translates not simply as the desire of prestige, but also the desire to acquire power over others” (Slomp, 2000, p. 33).

solution.”<sup>30</sup> One senses that *Behemoth's* A and the general aims of *Leviathan* as outlined in the preceding section share the optimistic assumption Niebuhr attributes to social science. As we have seen, A wonders “why may not men be taught their duty” and *Leviathan* seems to be a work that is devoted to teaching citizens their duty. The problem with this solution, like all scientific solutions, is that “reason is always, to some degree, the servant of interest in a social situation,” and “social injustice cannot be resolved by moral and rational suasion alone, as the educator and social scientist usually believes. Conflict is inevitable, and in this conflict power must be challenged by power.”<sup>31</sup> In other words, Niebuhr argues that no matter how reasonable a scientific solution may seem change can only occur within the political system through the use of coercion. The reasonableness of an administration in no way influences its longevity, because administrations do not sustain themselves through their reasonableness alone. The strength of an individual’s partisan affiliation can and often does trump the individual’s loyalty to the state, for a science of politics that presumes that the collective body politic will be rational fails to account for the stubbornness of human factions to presume their own prerogatives in defiance of what is rational. In Niebuhr’s realism, the persuasive power of science can do little to convince factions to abrogate their desire for dominance, for reason oftentimes served as a pretext and moral justification for partisan conflict.

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<sup>30</sup> Niebuhr (2001), p. xxvi.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. xxvii.

History, Niebuhr claimed, showed the futility of social science to create the sort of theories that were applicable to politics.<sup>32</sup>

To be fair, *Leviathan* recognized that the commonwealth was only as stable as the willingness of individuals to abrogate their partisan loyalty in favor of loyalty to the state. Hobbes admitted that “nothing can be immortall, which mortals make; yet, if men had the use of reason they pretend to, their Common-wealths might be secured, at least, from perishing by internall diseases.”<sup>33</sup> Of course, the security of the commonwealth is predicated on a very tenuous *if*, for it may very well be the case that human beings simply persist in their irrationality. In this light, *Leviathan* seems to be a hope rather than a serious plan for change. The way Hobbes counteracted the power that factions had over the public was simply to describe such loyalties as absurd, an example being the comparison of the Papacy to the “Kingdome of Fairies.”<sup>34</sup> What Niebuhr argues is that merely pointing out the absurdities that cause problems in politics does nothing to eliminate the absurdities from public life. The power that the Pope, the Presbyterian congregations, the aristocracy, or any insulated community exercises over public life is

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<sup>32</sup> “What is lacking among all these moralists, whether religious or rational, is an understanding of the brutal character of human collectives, and the power of self-interest and collective egoism in all intergroup relations. Failure to recognize the stubborn resistance of group egoism to all moral and inclusive social objectives inevitably involves them in unrealistic and confused political thought. They regard social conflict either as an impossible method of achieving morally approved ends or as a momentary expedient which a more perfect education or a purer religion will make unnecessary. They do not see that the limitations of the human imagination, the easy subservience of reason to prejudice and passion, and the consequent persistence of irrational egoism, particularly in group behavior, make social conflict an inevitability in human history, probably to its very end” (ibid., p. xxx).

<sup>33</sup> *Leviathan*, II.29.363.

<sup>34</sup> “Fairies have no existence, but in the Fancies of ignorant people, rising from the Traditions of old Wives, or old Poets: so the Spirituall Power of the *Pope* (without the bounds of his own Civill Dominion) consisteth onely in the Fear that Seduced people stand in, of their Excommunication; upon hearing of false Miracles, false Traditions, and false Interpretations of the Scripture,” (ibid., IV.47.714).

not contingent on whether it makes sense to science. As we have seen in chapter III, the group only needs to make sense to its members. Members of a group are naturally hesitant to embrace any philosophical critique that is prejudicial to their deeply held beliefs. In a humorous aside Niebuhr ridicules the notion that social science can topple unjust regimes as “most social scientists are such unqualified rationalists that they seem to imagine that men of power will immediately check their exactions and pretensions in society, as soon as they have been appraised by the social scientists that their actions and attitudes are anti-social.”<sup>35</sup> This description would seem to fit the Hobbes of *Leviathan* perfectly, for he presumed a persuasive power in science that required an enlightened public that he himself could not guarantee. If *Leviathan* was intended for general public consumption it would seem that the public was ill prepared to digest it.

E.H. Carr, a reader of both Hobbes and Niebuhr, critiqued social science in a different way. He examined the difference between scientific idealism and historical realism as rooted in the difference between the intellectual and the statesman. Carr observed that:

It is in the nature of things that the intellectual should find himself in the camp which seeks to make practice conform to theory; for intellectuals are particularly reluctant to recognize their thought as conditioned by forces external to themselves, and like to think of themselves as leaders whose theories provide the motive force for so-called men of action. Moreover, the whole intellectual outlook of the last two hundred years has been strongly coloured by the mathematical and natural sciences. To establish a general principle, and to test the particular in the light of that principle, has been assumed by most intellectuals to be the necessary foundation and starting-point of any science. In this respect, utopianism with its

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<sup>35</sup> Niebuhr (2001), p. xxvii.

insistence on general principles may be said to represent the characteristic intellectual approach to politics.<sup>36</sup>

What is important to understand here is that Carr's general criticism can also be applied to Hobbes's political science, for it too was "coloured by the mathematical and natural sciences." The reason why Hobbes's *Leviathan* is more utopian than realistic is found in the very qualities that made the work attractive to Dewey and Tönnies: its rigorous theoretical approach, the certainty with which it presented itself, and the optimistic belief in the ability of science to transform the regime. As a mathematician and humanist, Hobbes was an academic more than he was a man of action. Given his background, Hobbes was able to write the sort of treatise that would appeal to academicians.

Political philosophers, however, do not always come from the academy; some of the most important voices in political thought come from backgrounds in public service. Carr recognized that the "bureaucrat purports to handle each particular problem 'on its merits'" or "to eschew the formulation of principles and to be guided on the right course by some intuitive process born of long experience and not of conscious reasoning."<sup>37</sup> This is the political thought we find in Machiavelli, a thinker who demonstrates Carr's assertion that "practice, not theory, bureaucratic training, not intellectual brilliance, is the school of political wisdom."<sup>38</sup> This practical wisdom of politics "is bound up with the

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<sup>36</sup> See Carr's *Twenty Years' Crisis: 1919-1939*, second edition (New York: Harper and Row, 1946), p. 14.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* Compare this to what Machiavelli states in chapter 15 of *The Prince*, "And many have imagined republics and principalities that have never been seen or known to exist in truth; for it is so far from how one lives to how one should live that he who lets go of what is done for what should be done learns his ruin rather than his preservation" (p. 61). Notice also that Machiavelli recommends in chapter 14 that "a prince should read histories," as opposed to philosophy, "and consider in them the actions of excellent men,

existing order, the maintenance of tradition, and the acceptance of precedent as the ‘safe’ criterion of action.”<sup>39</sup> Turning back to Lincoln Steffens, this is the wisdom that made organizations such as Tammany Hall so formidable. When asked why reform administrations filled with educated men had difficulty sustaining themselves, Tammany insider George Washington Plunkitt answered:

The fact is that a reformer can’t last in politics. He can make a show in it for a while, but he always comes down like a rocket. Politics is as much a regular business as the grocery or the dry-goods or the drug business. You’ve got to be trained up for it or you’re sure to fall. . . . It’s just the same with a reformer. He hasn’t been brought up in the difficult business of politics and he makes a mess of it every time.<sup>40</sup>

It would seem from this passage that realistic politics is not an academic endeavor. It is, as Plunkitt so bluntly put it, “difficult business” and requires a set of skills that has more in common with the concreteness of history than it does with the abstract clarity of geometry. When we examine how Hobbes portrays sovereignty in *Leviathan*, we see it as a list of powers and duties necessary for the purposes of the commonwealth. Viewed in this way, the sovereign is no more than the people’s clerk, albeit one with high status and meaning in the commonwealth.<sup>41</sup> *Leviathan*’s strength is that it reduces the art of

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should see how they conducted themselves in wars, should examine the causes of their victories and losses, so as to be able to avoid the latter and imitate the former” (p. 60). Compare this with *Leviathan*’s description of vainglory in chapter 6, “which consisteth in the feigning or supposing of abilities in our selves, which we know are not, is most incident to young men, and nourished by the Histories, or Fictions of Gallant Persons; and is corrected often times by Age, and Employment” (*Leviathan*, I.6.125).

<sup>39</sup> Carr (1946), p. 16.

<sup>40</sup> Riordon (1994), pp. 58-59.

<sup>41</sup> Those who are familiar with Richard Neustadt’s work on the American presidency will recognize the argument here, for “‘powers’ are no guarantee of power; clerkship is no guarantee of leadership. The President of the United States has an extraordinary range of formal powers, of authority in statute law and in the Constitution.” And yet “despite his ‘powers’ he does not obtain results by giving orders—or not, at

governing to a science that may be quickly and readily understood by practically anyone with the patience and inclination to digest it. However, this may also be *Leviathan's* greatest weakness, because sovereignty is only as capable as the person who possesses it. In this sense, what differentiates an effective sovereign executive from an ineffective one depends upon the sovereign's personal and charismatic qualities. Hobbes's scientific method was appealing to social scientists such as Dewey and Tönnies, who believed that a systematic approach was necessary to understand the underlying dynamics of political consent. However, politics and political persuasion were still very much human endeavors that were subject to the inherent strengths and weaknesses of human beings as political actors. This is not a theme that resonates strongly in *Leviathan*, but a closer inspection of the work reveals that Hobbes was also writing for another audience, one that was far more politically astute and able to implement the lessons in *Leviathan*.

### Section 3: The Applicability of Hobbes's Science

A close inspection of *Leviathan* reveals that Hobbes was already moving in the direction of giving advice to statesmen before his dialogues were written. Chapter 31 reveals that the intended audience of *Leviathan* not only includes those who serve and are instructed by the academy, but also includes existing sovereigns of states or even potential sovereigns of states. We find that Hobbes understood that if the recommendation so carefully described in *Leviathan* had any hope of implementation, it

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any rate, merely by giving orders. He also has extraordinary status, ex officio, according to the customs of our government and politics. Here is testimony that despite his status he does not get action without argument. Presidential power is the power to persuade." See Richard Neustadt's *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*, 1990 Edition (New York, NY: Free Press, 1990), pp. 10-11.

would have to come from an already established sovereign. Moreover, the sovereign had to be of the type that is independent or mindful enough to read and consider the work alone without the aid of advisors, whether loyal or not. This presupposes that the sovereign possesses a modicum of time, leisure, and inclination for study. Besides these personal qualities, Hobbes understood that the sovereign who was to promulgate and implement his *Leviathan* needed to have the ability to “exercise . . . entire sovereignty”<sup>42</sup> to implement his policy for the subjects under this rule. This seems to imply that it was necessary for the sovereign to possess this power before *Leviathan* could successfully be promulgated to the people as Hobbes seemed convinced that his philosophy would come under attack.<sup>43</sup> Viewed in this way, *Leviathan* is not so much an argument to adopt the absolute sovereign representative, but rather presupposes that the absolute sovereign is already in place. Given that Hobbes wrote *Leviathan* specifically because he believed that philosophy needed to be “put into order,” Hobbes further required that the sovereign in question would be unusually open-minded. In short, just as Plato required a Dion of Syracuse, or Machiavelli required a Lorenzo de’Medici, so too did Hobbes require a sovereign with certain specific qualities to bring the commonwealth into order.

Yet this presents a problem for Hobbes. On the one hand, he suggests in *Leviathan*’s chapter 31 that only a sovereign with sufficient power can hope to implement his vision of the properly constructed commonwealth. On the other hand, Hobbes

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<sup>42</sup> *Leviathan*, II.31.408.

<sup>43</sup> “There ought certainly to be great care taken, to have it [civil and moral doctrine] pure, both from the Venime of Heathen Politicians, and from the Incantation of Deceiving Spirits. And by that means the most men, knowing their Duties, will be less subject to serve the Ambition of a few discontented persons” (*Leviathan*, Review and Conclusion, p. 728).



suggests in *Leviathan's* chapter 29 that only a properly constructed commonwealth can give the sovereign the power needed to secure *salus populi*. True to his model of the commonwealth as an artificial person, Hobbes identifies the “infirmities” of the commonwealth in terms of “imperfect institution” and “seditious doctrine” corresponding to “defectious procreation” and “poyson” in the human body.<sup>44</sup> The infirmities caused by imperfect institution are reduced to one: “want of absolute power.”<sup>45</sup> In other words, commonwealths that provide only limited power to the sovereign authority necessarily limit the ability of the sovereign to protect the people from threats.

Hobbes packages his explanation of imperfect institution in the form of advice to a governing sovereign. He observes that “when Kings deny themselves some such necessary Power, it is not always (though sometimes) out of ignorance of what is necessary to the office they undertake; but many times out of a hope to recover the same again at their pleasure.”<sup>46</sup> One is reminded of those sovereigns discussed in Hobbes’s dialogues, like Henry VII, Henry VIII, and Elizabeth I, who governed with Parliament when it was convenient. Here, however, Hobbes states that sovereigns who would limit the power of the office by choice “reason not well; because such as will hold them to their promises, shall be maintained against them by forraign Common-wealths; who in order to the good of their own Subjects let slip few occasions to *weaken* the estate of their

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., II.29.363-365.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., II.29.364.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

Neighbours.”<sup>47</sup> Sovereigns should never give up their prerogatives, for if circumstances require sovereigns to take their prerogatives back, it “hath the resemblance of an unjust act; which disposeth great numbers of men (when occasion is presented) to rebell.”<sup>48</sup>

This advice is also important because Hobbes uses history to justify this advice. He uses the examples of Henry II, William I, William II, the Roman republic, and the Athenian democracy under Solon as evidence that sovereigns sometimes have difficulty reacquiring prerogatives that were given up.

In this respect, the explanation resembles the reason of state arguments from Hobbes’s earlier works and the dialogues he would produce after the Restoration. All of the elements associated with Hobbes’s dialogues are here in his explanation of imperfect institution. To start, Hobbes framed the problem of imperfect institution in terms of the sovereign’s actions and not as a constitutional problem or a problem of institutional structure. Hobbes emphasizes the role that public perception plays in the stability of the commonwealth and gives the sovereign practical advice on how public perception can be influenced. He also uses history to show why it is important for sovereigns to follow his advice, relying on historical examples to prove his case rather than proving it himself through the use of abstract analogies.

This advice seems to be maintained by Hobbes in his later writings as well. Hobbes’s science claimed that Charles I had unlimited prerogative power as sovereign by right of the office. This included the right to acquire funds for the defense of the

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

commonwealth, something that *Behemoth's* A explains when discussing the ship money controversy.<sup>49</sup> Yet when asserting this right, Charles I's sovereign prerogative was blocked by Parliament. The conventional understanding of why Parliament blocked Charles I's acquisition of ship money is that Parliament was emboldened by the success it had in freeing a "few preachers and writers" who were imprisoned for sedition.<sup>50</sup> It then proceeded against Charles I's prerogative to levy ship money, rallying "against it as an oppression" against the Petition of Right signed almost a decade earlier by Charles I himself as well as other more ancient precedents that preceded him.<sup>51</sup> Although Hobbes does not mention Charles I in his examples of sovereigns who are unable to gain back prerogatives that are given away, the inability of Charles I to procure ship money could be linked to Charles I's signing of the Petition of Right in 1628. Thus *Leviathan* foreshadows the approach Hobbes takes in his dialogues, as Hobbes starts to approach the

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<sup>49</sup> When the people give the sovereign "the burthen of defending the whole kingdom, and governing it, upon any person whatsoever, there is very little equity he should depend on others for the means of performing it; or if he do, they are his Sovereign, not he theirs" (*Behemoth*, p. 37). Compare this to Hobbes's argument in *Leviathan* concerning the private citizens' right of propriety. While Hobbes admits that "every man has indeed a Propriety that excludes the Right of every other Subject," he also admits that this does not exclude the sovereign, for "if the Right of the Sovereign also be excluded, he cannot performe the office they [the people] have put him into; which is, to defend them both from forraign enemies, and from the injuries of one another; and consequently there is no longer a commonwealth" (*Leviathan*, II.29.367-368).

<sup>50</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 36.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, The Petition of Right was a limitation on sovereign power signed in 1628. It prevented the monarch from creating new taxes or levies without Parliamentary approval. Jurist Oliver St. John best articulated Parliament's argument. "If a French or a Spanish army landed unexpectedly in Kent or Devonshire, no one would blame the Government because it seized horses from a gentleman's stable to drag artillery, or ordered its troops to charge across a farmer's cornfields. It was a matter of notoriety, however, that the present [ship money] case no such danger had occurred. Writs have been issued in August for the purpose of equipping a fleet which was not needed till March." St. John also noted "that the Kings of England had frequently paid for services done in the defence of the realm, even when they had been forced to borrow money to enable them to do so. Surely, he urged, no king would have done this if he had been aware that he might legally impose the burden on his subjects" (Gartiner, 1882, Vol. I, pp. 59-60).

task of leadership as a matter of the sovereign's actions rather than as a matter solely related to the institutional structure of the commonwealth.

However, Hobbes's *Leviathan* seems to be less focused on offering the sovereign practical advice than it is on the broad mandates or duties of sovereignty. The absolute sovereign that Hobbes envisions in *Leviathan* cannot be just any sovereign, but one who places just rule ahead of personal gain. In order to ensure the safety of the people, the sovereign had to be equitable toward his subjects, and equity requires that "justice be equally administered to all degrees of people."<sup>52</sup> *Behemoth's* A believed that Charles I's administration met this standard, but this was not enough to secure his reign. Like the citizens of New York City at the time of Steffens, Charles I's subjects had no appreciation for good administration. After A describes the seven groups which seduced the English people to civil war, B makes the observation that, "in such a constitution . . . the King is already ousted of his government, so as they needed not arms for it. For I cannot imagine how the King may come by any means to resist them."<sup>53</sup> Despite having nearly unlimited power and the innate sense of equity to use that power fairly, Charles I was unable to secure peace within the commonwealth.

While Hobbes indicates in *Leviathan* that it is the sovereign's responsibility never to waive or forego the prerogatives of the office, what is a sovereign to do if the office itself does not grant the prerogatives that Hobbes's science deems necessary? While the advice Hobbes gives to sovereigns in chapter 28 of *Leviathan* is similar to the advice

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<sup>52</sup> *Leviathan*, II.30.385.

<sup>53</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 4.

implied in his dialogues, what is lacking in Hobbes's science in *Leviathan* is a realistic assessment of the limitations of what a sovereign can do in a given historical circumstance. Conversely, there is no recognition in *Leviathan* that a sovereign's political skill can overcome the limitations that the political environment presents. While it is certainly Hobbes's hope that science, those "rules of just and unjust sufficiently demonstrated, and from principles evident to the meanest capacity,"<sup>54</sup> will prevent civil war and protect good sovereigns, Hobbes in *Behemoth* recognized that no regime in history—not even his own regime—was able to overcome civil unrest through general scientific enlightenment. This becomes apparent when we recognize that B's role in *Behemoth* is instrumental to the central theme. If "people always have been, and always will be, ignorant of their duty to the public,"<sup>55</sup> politics will require a sovereign than can survive in such a hostile environment. The fact that Hobbes emphasizes the importance of both "politik capacity" and "natural capacity" in *A Dialogue* only underscores the point that the success or failure of a sovereign's governance can only be partly explained by the constitutional powers of the office. When assessing Charles I—or any sovereign for that matter—personal skill becomes equally important. That is why the collapse of Charles I's regime can be only partly explained by the conventional understanding that "the people were corrupted generally, and disobedient persons esteemed the best patriots."<sup>56</sup> While this may have been true, it does not explain how sovereigns such as

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

William I, Henry VII, Henry VIII, and Elizabeth I could have long and prestigious reigns. They, like Charles I, had to contend with religious upheaval, cultural upheaval, wars, customary expectations, and unpopular taxation. Yet these sovereigns, far from losing their heads, were historically revered for their ability to govern the English commonwealth. Hobbes's closer examination of these sovereigns in his dialogues suggests that he is attempting something different in his dialogues than in his treatises, but what exactly is he trying to convey, and why is it important?

#### Section 4: Conclusion

Hobbes's science is similar to A's view of the events between 1640 and 1660 in *Behemoth*: "as from the Devil's Mountain," an analogy that includes both distance and perspective. Hobbes's science has some distance from its subjects. It does not explain political turmoil or stability by describing particular places, particular personalities, or particular times. In other words, Hobbes's science does not generally include firsthand accounts from real events as a way of explaining politics. Instead, the scientist takes a perspective that is detached from the reality under investigation, using reified models to explain the phenomena under investigation. Although Hobbes admits his *Leviathan* draws inspiration from the English Civil War,<sup>57</sup> the work is considerably broader in its appeal and applicability. This is where Hobbes's perspective plays a key role. Just as A claimed to be able to see "all kinds of injustice, and all kinds of folly" from his perspective atop the Devil's Mountain, Hobbes also claimed that the conclusions of his science were not limited to any particular time or historical circumstance. His science

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<sup>57</sup> *Leviathan*, Review and Conclusion, p. 728.

offers a simplified framework that is akin to mathematical rules which “discharges our mentall reckoning, of time and place; and delivers us from all labour’s of the mind, saving the first; and makes that which was found true *here*, and *now*, to be true in *all times and places*.”<sup>58</sup>

Continuing the analogy of the Devil’s Mountain, one might imagine two spectators of human activity in a city corresponding to the two ways human beings gain knowledge of human activity. One observer is on the street and in the crowd, observing directly all the flavor and nuances of the subjects under investigation. The observer’s senses are filled with a richness of detail about individual human beings, and especially when any particular human being is unique, special, or draws attention to himself. One can certainly gain a great wealth of information about human beings by observing in this fashion, but the scope and certainty of the observer’s knowledge will be limited in a number of crucial ways. The observer’s information will be limited to the street he observes, which may not necessarily be applicable to other streets in the city that are not under observation. Moreover, the observer is not only a passive spectator, but is also a part of the crowd. As such, the observer will be subject to all of the same conditions the crowd is subjected to. The observer’s attention will be drawn to the same phenomena that draw the crowd, and there is a chance that the observations gained will not be indicative of the underlying truth of what is actually occurring. This is akin to the previous method of political philosophy that the divinity schools in Hobbes’s time practiced, and the method Hobbes criticized.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., I.4.104.

Let us then imagine another observer, but instead of observing a city from street level, this observer gazes from a vantage point that can observe the entire city at once. His vantage point is no longer limited to one street alone but includes all of the streets at the same time. Moreover, the observer is no longer part of the crowd and is therefore able to see the city without actually becoming a part of the city. From such a vantage point, the observer is able to see the general patterns as everyone goes about his business on the streets below. While this observer from this vantage point cannot make out the details of the people that he observes, he is also not deceived by those details as the crowds are. If we imagine science as Hobbes does, the political scientist is one who is like this second observer: a discerner of universal knowledge about human beings and the political institutions they create using a high vantage point. However, instead of a *physical* vantage point, the political scientist uses a *conceptual* vantage point, one that uses a theoretical framework and a precise method to discern general laws concerning human nature and government. This does not require knowledge of particular human beings or particular governments, for studying particulars is akin to using the vantage point of the first observer; the knowledge of particular past events or people can yield little in terms of general laws and immutable truth, though it can have the illusion of law or truth. Hobbes's science, however, indicates that this kind of knowledge yields anything but certainty.<sup>59</sup> Knowledge gained from ratiocination, or through systematic method, possesses a certainty that common memory, experience, or prudence can never possess. It is the conceptual vantage point, or using *Behemoth's* A's words, the Devil's

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., I.3.97.



Mountain, that provides him with a much better perspective from which he may derive universal truth.

Like many social scientists that would succeed him, Hobbes hoped that his method could yield a kind of universal understanding of politics and justice available to everyone. This does not imply, however, that Hobbes's vision was resistant to criticism. Just as the idealism of social scientists would come under attack from the realists in the twentieth century, Hobbes's idealism came under attack when the leading scholars of his age criticized the validity of his science. Turning back to the introduction of this study, three criticisms were leveled against Hobbes's science in his time, criticisms reiterated by scholars closer to our own time when they reflect on Hobbes's science.

The first of these criticisms was shared by both Clarendon from Hobbes's time and Jane Mansbridge from our own. Both concluded that Hobbes's science has a narrow view of human nature. For them, Hobbes's science determined that human beings are not only motivated primarily by self-interest, but a particularly narrow form of self-interest that failed to take into account the ability of human beings to act in concord with one another. While Hobbes's dialogues do not dispute the claim that human beings are motivated by self-interest, they also show that the motivations that underpin human behavior are more nuanced than those described in Hobbes's science. A reader of Hobbes's dialogues will certainly find a plethora of examples that show mankind's selfish nature. One will also find several passages that show mankind's hope for a better, more moral and fulfilling life. To achieve this life, human beings are more apt to follow "their immediate leaders; which are either the preachers, or the most potent of the

gentlemen that dwell amongst them” than they are to follow their own interests.<sup>60</sup> The dialogues show that human beings are, in truth, far more naturally governable than Mansbridge and Clarendon assume. Human beings naturally gravitate toward those leaders who can promise them felicity even if those leaders promise impossibilities such as “security against all the World.”<sup>61</sup> The dialogues show that human beings can make good decisions such as the choice to restore the crown to the Stuarts. However, the dialogues also show that human beings often place their hopes for a better future in the hands of those who “seem wise,” but use their wisdom only to “abuse the Common People to their own ends.”<sup>62</sup> Far from being creatures that suffer on account of their natural selfishness, Hobbes’s human beings seem unaware of what their self-interest requires, gravitating towards any personality that may offer them deliverance from their woes.

This depiction of human beings is not absent from Hobbes’s science, nor is it absent from the interpretations of Hobbes’s dialogues by scholars such as Robert Kraynak.<sup>63</sup> *Behemoth* and *A Dialogue* show how human beings are often misled. They make decisions that seem amicable to their interests only to discover that the only interests that are served are the ambitions of a select few. This widespread naïveté

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<sup>60</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 39.

<sup>61</sup> *A Dialogue*, p. 66.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>63</sup> Kraynak (1990), p. 73.

constituted a problem in politics and, as Kraynak rightly observed, this was a problem that Hobbes's political science was designed to counteract.<sup>64</sup>

It is not, however, the solution that was adopted by the English people during the Restoration. On the one hand, Hobbes's history of the English Civil War shows why political science is useful. On the other, it shows how peace can be achieved when political science plays no part in achieving it. The same tendency that causes human beings to follow bad leaders is also the means by which human beings can choose good leaders: sovereigns who have both natural ability and the good sense to govern well. Human beings follow leaders on the basis of whether their interests will be served, and they determine whether their interests are served by referring to their own experiences under good and bad leaders. While not perfect, this common sense reckoning is the best reckoning that human beings possess when science is unavailable. Science alone can do nothing when it is never allowed to influence a general audience. Memory, however, is available to everyone. Using the example of the street observer, the person who uses memory to discern the truth will not have the privileged perspective available to the observer that takes a vantage point outside of the crowd. The street observer is part of the crowd and can be misled or deceived as everyone else. Unable to utilize a higher vantage point that observes the whole city, the street observer is limited in his perception. Unless an event is large or vivid enough to capture the attention of every person on every street, each observer on street level will have a very limited and perhaps unreliable conception

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<sup>64</sup> "This new type of philosophical enterprise is Hobbes's science of the enlightenment. It seeks to transform the nature of civil society by abolishing the historical realm of authoritative opinion and replacing it with a universally recognized doctrine of science that stands on its own evident foundations" (Kraynak, 1990, p. 31).

of the city as a whole. A's observation that the instigators of the Civil War "had learned nothing"<sup>65</sup> seems to support the notion that whatever led the English people to restore the monarchy had little to do with the adoption of better, more enlightened, principles.

Rather, the Restoration was brought about because the instigators of the rebellion "knew they had acted vilely and sottishly,"<sup>66</sup> implying that the factions involved in the rebellion learned something; but how did they learn this—and more importantly—from where?

The only explanation seems to be that the memory of the events between the late 1630's and early 1660's taught the English people that it was in its interest to restore the monarchy. While Hobbes prefers knowledge gained by ratiocination to knowledge gained from experience, the English Civil War was not just any experience. For Hobbes, it was a series of events that affected nearly every aspect of English life and included nearly every person in the English commonwealth. The fact that *Behemoth* ends with the vast majority of the people reaching the same conclusion about the necessity of bringing Charles II to the throne only reaffirms that a suitably vivid, large, or important event can serve as a teacher. This would certainly explain why Hobbes would write in *Behemoth's* Epistle Dedicatory that "there can be nothing more instructive towards loyalty and justice than will be the memory, while it lasts" of the English Civil War.<sup>67</sup> Determining how one's self-interest is best served can be a complicated matter to discern. Memory, experience, and prudence are often insufficient in themselves to provide clarity in terms

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<sup>65</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 202.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>67</sup> *Behemoth*, p. liii.

of understanding how one's interest is served. Yet it seems that an experience as large and encompassing as civil war can serve as a catalyst for reflection on how one's self-interest is best served. This is something of a departure from the teaching found in Hobbes's scientific treatises where memories and experiences are typically denigrated as sources of correct knowledge. *Behemoth* is a case study in how the English people were able to discover peace despite the fact that science had little or no impact in fostering the peace.

This is not the only way in which Hobbes's dialogues offer a more comprehensive view of politics than the one found in his scientific treatises alone. Clarendon made another criticism of Hobbes's science in the seventeenth century, a criticism that persisted into the twentieth century through the writings of Hannah Arendt and Albert Hirschman. Specifically, Hobbes's science seems to devalue the capacity of human beings to practice virtue, heroism, and other actions that one might call noble. Hobbes's science as outlined in his treatises attributes such high actions as a manifestation of what he calls "vain-glory" which "consisteth in the feigning or supposing of abilities in our selves, which we know are not."<sup>68</sup> Instead, Hobbes's science tends to praise the low or base motives of human beings such as the "desire of ease, and sensuall Delight," for these are identified as those motives that "disposeth men to obey a common Power."<sup>69</sup>

Hobbes did not always believe that these lower motivations such as the desire for sensual delight are always good, nor did he always believe that those higher or more

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<sup>68</sup> *Leviathan*, I.6.125.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, I.11.161.

noble motivations such as virtue or heroism are necessarily destructive. *Behemoth's* A issues strong condemnation to those partisans who "would have taken any side for pay or plunder."<sup>70</sup> Perhaps the best example of a group of people that has a strong desire for ease and sensual delight would be the city of London, which "has a great belly, but no palate nor taste of right and wrong."<sup>71</sup> It would seem that the "belly," symbolizing the desires of the people, can cause more discord than peace unless it is tempered by civilizing influences. Hobbes's hope was that science could temper these desires, or at least direct them towards the understanding that they can be best served by obedience to a common power. London would be the first city to support Lord Monck's faction, eventually restoring the monarchy, but the influence of science as Hobbes understood it played little or no role in persuading London to support Lord Monck's faction. One might be inclined to claim, as Hobbes seemed to claim, that the city of London was one of those groups that had learned nothing and was just as much governed by its belly after the Restoration as it was before.

Yet what could account for the change that brought about the Restoration? Besides the notion that the memories and experiences of the people might have been instrumental in causing a change of disposition, the English Civil War revealed the character and skill of a wide variety of political actors. Some of these actors, such as Lord Monck, were able to operate in a political environment that was hardly ideal by the standards of Hobbes's science. Mixed government, stubborn customs, persistent

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<sup>70</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 2.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

precedents, and a want of absolute prerogative were political realities that faced not only the key figures of the English Civil War, but also those monarchs in English history that preceded the war. It may have been Hobbes's hope that the English constitutional structure could mimic the model outlined in his *Leviathan* and elsewhere in his scientific works. The fact of the matter was, however, that the powers and prerogatives of the sovereign could in no way substitute for the sovereign's skill. Unfortunately, there is little discussion in Hobbes's scientific treatises on the subject of political skill, those skills that separate effective sovereigns from ineffective ones. The closest Hobbes comes to a discussion of political skill is a rather broad mandate that the sovereign should be skillful enough to ensure that the duty of securing *salus populi* is fulfilled and a rather stern suggestion that a sovereign should not willingly give up those powers vested in the office. However, none of this explains exactly how a sovereign is to fulfill the mandate of procuring *salus populi*, nor does this explain how a sovereign is to conduct his affairs if a necessary constitutional power is formally lacking or taken away by forces beyond his control. The reality of sovereignty in practice is far more nuanced than the rational, yet simplistic, ideal institution of sovereign as described in Hobbes's science.

Hobbes never claimed that the institution of sovereign could not be improved. One can assume that he believed the institution of sovereignty could very much be improved, but the striking feature of his post-Restoration dialogues is how much he emphasized leadership as opposed to institutions. His dialogues contain evidence of personal qualities that made particular sovereigns excel at the role. Sovereigns that are criticized in Hobbes's scientific treatises are praised in Hobbes's dialogues; William the

Conqueror, Henry VII, and Elizabeth I receive a far better assessment from Hobbes in the dialogues than they do in his science. It is how each of these sovereigns uses the power of the office, rather than how each increased the authority of the office, that distinguishes these sovereigns from others. For example, Henry VIII's shrewd political maneuvering after his separation from the Catholic Church was, for Hobbes, more important than the establishment of the Anglican Church. Henry VII was praised for his ability to acquire funds in spite of the fact that he had to levy these funds through Parliament. This is why Hobbes described Henry VII and Henry VIII in terms of the "two great virtues"<sup>72</sup> as both sovereigns displayed uncanny skill that came from their own personalities rather than from the office they filled.

This praise of skill is not limited to sovereigns only, but also extends to Lord Monck and his "greatest stratagem that is extant in history."<sup>73</sup> While he possessed no formal title of sovereignty other than the right of the sword, Lord Monck began and oversaw a chain of events that would eventually restore both the monarchy and peace to a war-weary England. While Hobbes's characters described Monck's actions in *glorious* terms, it would be a mistake to claim that Monck's actions were *vainglorious*.

*Behemoth's* A hopes that the king shall "have as often as there shall be need" of a general like Monck,<sup>74</sup> suggesting that Monck's example is worthy of emulation, not condemnation. Public virtue, therefore, is not a characteristic that should concern

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 204.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.



sovereigns only, but should also concern the people under the sovereign's rule. Far from being a passive figure desiring safety and comfort, Lord Monck is praised for taking an active role in providing order, leadership, and stability when the sovereign is unable to provide these things. This idea of public virtue was an idea that Hobbes held early in his career, and he reintroduced it in his dialogues. Taken as a whole, Hobbes's writings seem to show that human beings are capable of acting on motives that one might call publically spirited or noble. Far from being destructive, such high motives are crucial to the establishment and maintenance of peace and order. This is not a concept that is easy to glean from Hobbes's science solely, but is readily apparent when Hobbes's dialogues and pre-scientific writings are considered alongside Hobbes's science.

Considering only Hobbes's science, one is led to believe that politics does not require political skill as such, but a knowledge of "certain Rules, as doth Arithmetique and Geometry."<sup>75</sup> In other words, Hobbes promoted the idea that the problems of civil society could be solved through the correct application of scientifically derived solutions. This belief that science could overcome, and perhaps even replace, the statesman's art (referred to as mere "tennis-play" by Hobbes) was one of the reasons Hobbes was perennially criticized from the time of Bishop Bramhall to more recent times. For Bramhall, Hobbes's scientific doctrine failed to capture the essence of politics as a complex and dynamic enterprise based upon the needs of the moment. Instead, Hobbes's science described politics as a rather simple and static exercise based upon general rules, which in Bramhall's view, "signifie not much in policy" because "the quintessence of

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<sup>75</sup> *Leviathan*, II.21.261

policy doth consist in the dexterous and skillful application of those rules to the subject matter.”<sup>76</sup> There is little direct evidence that Hobbes actually took Bramhall’s criticism seriously. However, Hobbes does seem to focus his attention on the dynamic nature of leadership more thoroughly in his post-Restoration dialogues than he did in his pre-Restoration scientific treatises. This is most apparent when we examine B’s contribution to Hobbes’s overall message in *Behemoth* alongside A’s contribution.

Besides offering historical examples of skilled politicians, Hobbes offers practical advice to sovereigns through his characters. Examples occur throughout the dialogue, such as “they that keep an army, and cannot master it, must be subject to it as much as he that keeps a lion in his house” and “those princes that with preferment are forced to buy the obedience of their subjects, are already, or must be soon after, in a very weak condition.”<sup>77</sup> Such statements give the sovereign practical advice to be applied in the actual course of governing, which is somewhat different from the advice Hobbes presents in his science concerning the general powers and mandates the sovereign should possess. While *Leviathan* includes arguments for why sovereigns should have a *monopoly* on the use of force, it says relatively little about the sovereign’s responsibility to *master* the use of force. While *Leviathan* gives the sovereign the power to honor and dishonor, it says relatively little about the consequences of preferment in terms of its ramifications on the sovereign’s ability to lead. Hobbes’s science relies on the correct establishment and order of institutions to create political stability. Hobbes’s dialogues, however, explain

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<sup>76</sup> See above in chapter I, p. 40.

<sup>77</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 193 and p. 72, respectively.

how the skill of sovereigns—more than the office of sovereign—sustains peace. While it is true that Hobbes’s science views leadership as the application of scientifically derived solutions to political problems, Hobbes’s dialogues describe how sovereigns respond to a dynamic political environment by adopting strategies that allow them a great amount of flexibility, sometimes following Hobbes’s set rules, and at other times breaking them. The sovereign is bound to ensure *salus populi* for all citizens under the sovereign’s care. However, sovereigns are allowed to be cruel, as King Ergamenes was cruel, when such cruelty is necessary. While Hobbes argues against mixed government in his science, mixed government need not be so problematic if the sovereign is skillful and wise enough to know when it is advantageous to defer to a parliament and when it is necessary to act outside of a parliament. Perhaps Charles I did not have this skill, but other sovereigns described in Hobbes’s dialogues did have it. Hobbes’s explanation that a sovereign “of ripe years and sound mind” will benefit from a strong Parliament only affirms that skillful sovereigns will be able to survive and even thrive in a contested political arena.

Closer to our own time, Kraynak also criticized Hobbes’s belief in the power of science. Instead of criticizing Hobbes’s science from a practical perspective as Bramhall did, Kraynak criticizes Hobbes’s scientific works because they have the potential to be just as dogmatic and uncompromising as the unscientific doctrines they are meant to replace. Kraynak views Hobbes’s scientific works as “authoritative dictionaries of political and philosophical terms—dictionaries in which Hobbes makes himself the new authority and says, in effect ‘trust me.’”<sup>78</sup> Far from being trusted, however, Hobbes’s

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<sup>78</sup> See Kraynak (1990), p. 156.

science was thoroughly condemned by most of his peers by the time he started to write his dialogues. Hobbes may have hoped that his science could offer a way out of the “Kingdom of Darkness” described in part IV of his *Leviathan*, and nothing in the dialogues suggest that his science was not still useful in many respects, especially with regard to understanding human nature and the proper ordering of institutions.

However, Hobbes seems to be much less optimistic in his dialogues than he is in his scientific treatises that science can offer a practical solution to the problems of the commonwealth, at least in the short term. *Behemoth*’s character A discusses the possibility that science can provide the intellectual foundation that is necessary to ensure loyalty to the sovereign. But, given the nature of both human beings and pedagogical institutions, it is highly unlikely that science can ever be promulgated as it needs to be in order for it to fulfill its intended purpose. While A maintains that university reform can and will solve the problem of sedition, the university reform instituted by the Long Parliament as described in dialogue three did nothing to save the people and Parliament from the ambitions of Oliver Cromwell. Such a failure shows a weakness of science: it can only be effective if political circumstances allow it to be. Fortunately, however, science may not be necessary to ensure peace. One should not let the morose tone of *Behemoth*’s narrative overshadow the fact that it has a happy ending. Despite the fact that the English people never did embrace Hobbes’s science, they nevertheless managed to restore the monarchy in spite of their ignorance. Their triumph can only be attributed

to a long exposure to uncertainty and bad rule, coupled with what B called “the greatest stratagem that is extant in history,” or General Monck’s *coup d’état*.<sup>79</sup>

While Bishop Bramhall and Kraynak may approach their respective critiques from different directions, both critics acknowledge that Hobbes’s science is too rigid and inflexible to be truly useful. Bramhall’s concern was that Hobbes failed to capture politics as a practical enterprise. Kraynak’s concern was that Hobbes’s enlightenment science was so detached from the reality it sought to explain, it seemed to legitimize “the ideological utopianism of the revolutionary intelligentsia” more than it seemed to legitimize stable—but anecdotal—explanations of effective politics.<sup>80</sup> In the dialogues, however, Hobbes seemed to eschew extended discussions on theoretical politics in favor of discussing politics in practice.

Given the real possibility that Hobbes became pessimistic that science could transform politics for the better, it is plausible that he turned his attention towards understanding leadership. If B’s assertion that “all the states of Christendom will be subject to these fits of rebellion, as long as the world lasteth”<sup>81</sup> is true, then the commonwealth requires leaders that are able to survive and govern through such periods. Truly capable leaders can function well even in circumstances that curtail or weaken their constitutional authority, while the reverse is not true. This can explain why Hobbes was much more sympathetic to the role of a strong Parliament in *A Dialogue* than he was in

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<sup>79</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 204.

<sup>80</sup> Kraynak (1990), p. 207.

<sup>81</sup> *Behemoth*, p. 71.

his scientific treatises. Strong leaders, like the historical monarchs that preceded Charles I, are able to assert their prerogatives even when their authority is constitutionally limited. They do this by using a combination of political capacity and natural capacity. However, merely increasing the political capacity of a sovereign in no way will make sovereigns more skillful. Charles I is a good example of a monarch who had a large amount of political capacity, but was nevertheless outmaneuvered by those who were more crafty than he. While Hobbes could not overtly criticize Charles I in *Behemoth*, the criticism is implied in both the veneration his characters give to the historical sovereigns and the various flaws of Charles I the characters delicately reveal throughout the narrative.

While Hobbes's scientific treatises contain arguments for absolute sovereignty, they do not include much guidance as to who is best suited to be sovereign or how the person who is made sovereign should fulfill the role. The dialogues attempt to fill in what was missing in Hobbes's science, albeit in a way that Hobbes's science could not fully endorse. History, prudence, and memory are all considered inferior sources of knowledge according to Hobbes's science, but these anecdotal sources of wisdom all play important roles in Hobbes's dialogues. One must have knowledge of history in order to discover examples of effective leadership in practice. What one discovers is that the prudence of leaders is what distinguishes effective leaders from ineffective ones. The memory of times of bad leadership, like the time of the English Civil War, can often be the best way for a body politic to practice loyalty and justice towards good leaders when they appear. Therefore, it is no surprise that Hobbes writes to Lord Arlington, "there can

be nothing more instructive towards loyalty and justice than the memory, while it lasts, of that war,”<sup>82</sup> and why Hobbes chose to write about the English Civil War after the Restoration.

In conclusion, it is tempting to view Thomas Hobbes as a rigid thinker who was fully committed to his scientific project: to bring order to the study of political philosophy through the establishment of a rigorous method of inquiry. The impact of his approach is evidence of the seriousness and care with which he produced his work, as *De Cive*, *Leviathan*, and *De Corpore* have influenced and continue to influence scholars to the present day. However, we should not let the influence of Thomas Hobbes’s famous works overshadow the fact that he was also a doubting Thomas: one who was self-critical and always open to better explanations of the world around him, especially with respect to human beings and the political forces that govern them. This should not be seen as a weakness, but a strength of Hobbes as a political philosopher of the first rank. Doubt does not imply denial, and the basic mission of Hobbes’s project remains the same throughout his career. Simply put, how can human beings bring order out of chaos, justice out of injustice, and stability out of instability? Hobbes’s science includes an institutional solution, one that calls upon the human capacity to be makers and shapers of institutions. Hobbes in his dialogues likewise calls upon human beings to be makers of their own political order, but he does so by analyzing the personalized solutions that various leaders and peoples create for themselves. An analysis of the English Civil War or the common law may not offer generalizable solutions to the problems of order and

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. liii.

peace. It does, however, realistically portray the conditions in which human beings find themselves. The characters in Hobbes's dialogues debate the relevance of theory to practice, revealing that politics itself is often a debate between theory and practice. Hobbes reaffirms that science can produce the most rational solution to our political ills through his dialogues, but he also recognizes the limitations of matching theory to practice. Recognizing this limitation, he rediscovered the important role human beings play in bringing about their own political destiny, bringing life to the institutions Hobbes so carefully considered in his treatises. Therefore, one may view the dialogues as a completion of Hobbes's philosophical project, but not because they describe the problem that Hobbes's science must solve. Rather, Hobbes's dialogues describe the problem of Hobbes's science as well as the solution to that problem: that the science of politics does not *replace* the art of rule, it *requires* the art of rule.



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